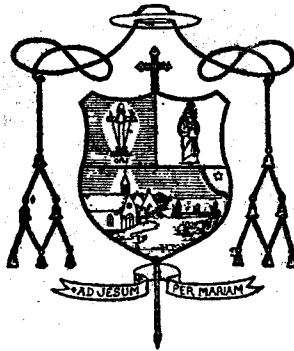


FIRST EFFORTS OF A MISSIONARY BISHOP

Mgr. Ovide Charlebois, O. M. I.

Bishop of Berenice,
Vicar Apostolic of Keewatin.



HIS TAKING POSSESSION,

HIS INSTALLATION,

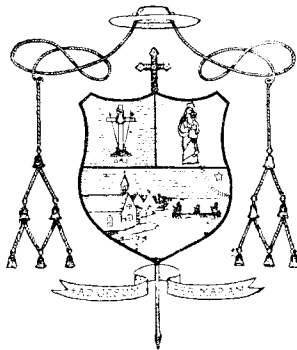
**HIS FIRST PASTORAL VISIT TO THE
INDIAN MISSIONS.**

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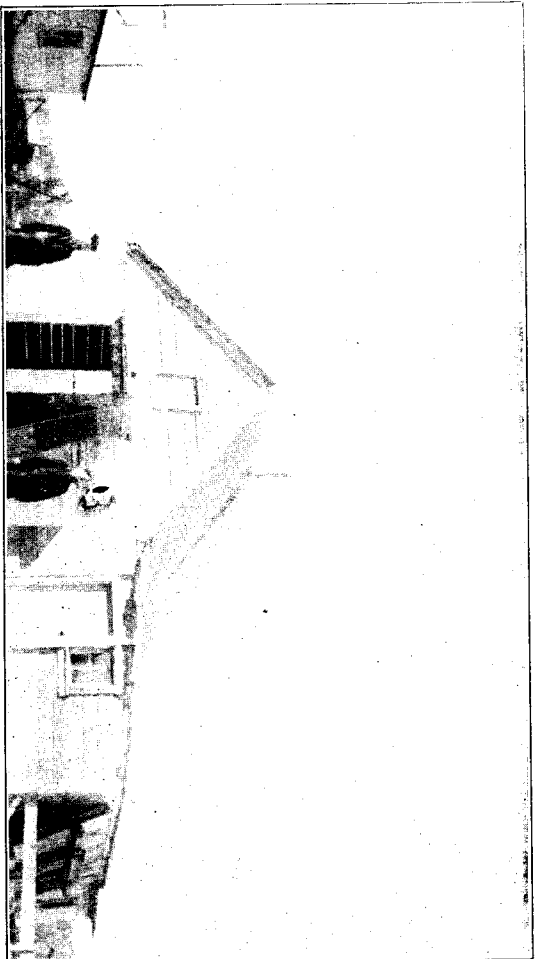
P R E F A C E

When, in March 1911, Mgr. Charlebois took possession of his vicariate apostolic of Keewatin, Father Turquetil, who had the good fortune to be present, described, with his ready pen, the ceremonies of the enthronization, and the visit which the new Bishop paid, shortly thereafter, to his former mission of Cumberland. Last summer, Mgr. Charlebois visited all the other missions under his charge. He had the happy inspiration to take almost daily notes of his journey, intended for his relatives and benefactors. It is these notes, preceded by Father Turquetil's account, above referred to, which we now offer to the public under the title of "First Efforts of a Missionary Bishop."

Mgr. Charlebois did not, however, confine himself in this diary of his journeys, to a mere description, such as only missionaries can give, of the thousand and one events of an apostolic visitation of more than four months, he also gives us most interesting particulars concerning each mission visited; population, the dispositions, manners and morals of the Indians, the good done, the needs of every kind; he makes known to us the intrepid Oblate Missionaries, who are engaged in evangelizing these inhospitable regions; he speaks, in a fatherly fashion, of their labors, their zeal, of their spirit of sacrifice; and lastly, he reveals to us, quite unconsciously, all the weariness, the privations, the cares, that are implied in his noble title of "Missionary Bishop."

These "First Efforts of a Missionary Bishop," then, are obviously of unusual interest; they form a page in the religious history of our country which is as glorious as it is important. Nor can they fail to convey an eloquent lesson to those of our contemporaries who are given up to sensuousness and to selfishness.

THE EDITORS.



FIRST RESIDENCE OF BISHOP CHARLEBOIS
HIS GRACE and REV. FATHER F. N. FAFARD, O.M.I.

BISHOP CHARLEBOIS

TAKES POSSESSION

OF HIS VICARIATE APOSTOLIC

Mgr. Ovide Charlebois entered his new Vicariate Apostolic of Keewatin on March 7th, last. To his many friends and relations the following notes will be of interest.

Extract from the Bishop's correspondence:

"I have at last arrived at my new home at Le Pas. I send you an account of the ceremonies of enthronization, etc.; everything was very simple, but very hearty.

"We live, Father Husson and I, in a little house built of squared logs, loaned to us by Dr. Larose. We take our meals with M. Boileau, who lives in the little building which Father Turquetil calls my episcopal palace. I sleep at the Hudson's Bay Company's factor's house, and Father Husson at Dr. Larose's. We have no beds of our own as yet. My writing table is a large packing case; our chairs are smaller boxes, perched on four wooden legs. Everything, as you will see, is in keeping with holy poverty.

"A thousand thanks and a heartfelt blessing to all my relations, friends and benefactors.

"OVIDE CHARLEBOIS,
"Vicar Apostolic of Keewatin."

RECEPTION AT THE MISSION OF LE PAS.

The eighth of March, 1911, was the beginning of a new era for the Indian missions of Keewatin, and those of Le Pas in particular. Yesterday His Lordship Mgr. Ovide Charlebois, appointed Bishop of Berenice, and first Vicar

Apostolic of Keewatin, by the the brief of August 8, 1910, arrived at Le Pas. The Rev. Father Turquetil, O.M.I., of the Lake Caribou mission, accompanied His Lordship who was received at the station by Father Renaud, on a visit here, and by all the Catholics of the place.

The smallest details connected with this first meeting with the Chief Pastor, are of the deepest interest; the kissing of the ring, the hearty handshakes, the simplicity, the ready and kindly smile of which His Lordship has the secret. This missionary Bishop is well known to everyone: and gives every one his own name. Eight years of absence have not chilled the love he bore to all these people for whose good he labored so earnestly.

The sight of him, indeed, gives joy, strength, and courage to this little flock, as indeed it is, since, hitherto, there has not even been a resident priest at Le Pas. And it is a Bishop who comes today, not simply on a visit, but to live in this little, new-born village.

Nor is their joy and happiness for themselves alone, but spread to others as well. There were many of our separated brethren present, with their minister at their head, to pay respect and deference to His Lordship. May God preserve this joy, this courage and this happiness in the hearts of all our Catholics.

Today, we had High Mass, and the reading of the bulls of His Holiness Pius X. It is the day of the enthronization of the first Vicar Apostolic of the new Vicariate of Keewatin. A great day, yet great only to the eye of faith! A grand and beautiful ceremony, yet of that grand and beautiful simplicity and poverty which are the heritage and glory of truly apostolic missionaries.

THE EPISCOPAL PALACE.

Here are more details. At ten o'clock, His Lordship leaves the house and the hospitality generously offered him by an English Catholic, and proceeds to the mission. Wind

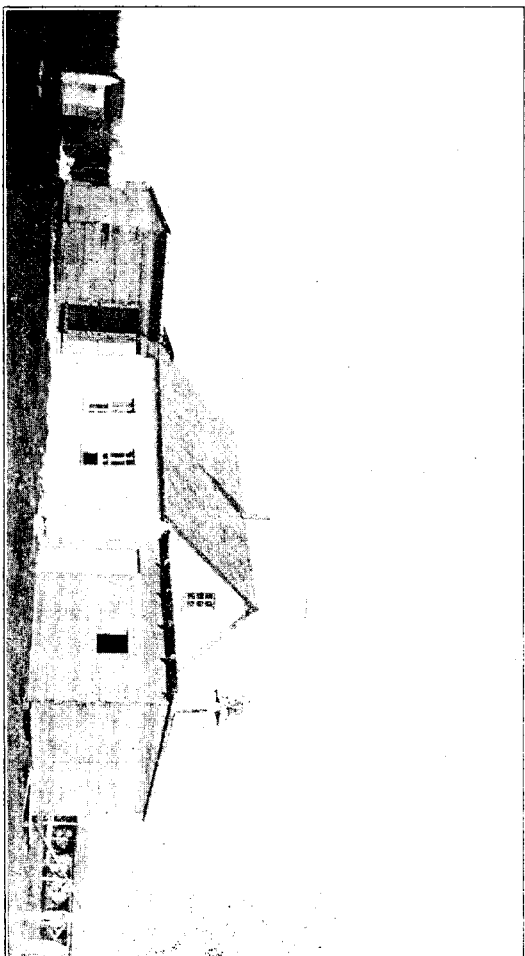
and storm accompany him: who would think of processions of honor in such weather.

As to the mission, that is to say, the present Palace, here is a description of it. A shelter fourteen feet square, with a slightly sloping roof, leaning against the back of the church; no more than that. Inside, two benches, a chair, an empty case used as a table, two trunks containing the linen or the provisions of the priest who occasionally stays here, a small kitchen stove, and the list of furniture is complete. As for decorations for the occasion, you will find none in this little dwelling, except a few cases that have come addressed to the Bishop.

On entering the Palace, the Bishop meets some of the Canadian Catholics; English, French, Metis, and Indians. Every man stands or sits as he can, or where he can. In the midst of this little world, His Lordship presides—sitting on a packing case. At the table, or rather, at the case which serves that purpose, Father Turquetil is translating the bulls into English and French. Father Renaud, half kneeling, half sitting on the floor, is writing on a bench. He is making a copy of the address he is to present to His Lordship.

THE CATHEDRAL.

Two o'clock already! From the Palace, that is to say, from the dining room, kitchen, bed room, office, store room, etc., the Bishop proceeds to his Cathedral. The distance is not great. A rectangular building, 22 feet by 19, of square logs, covered with a light coat of whitewash: nothing more. His Lordship himself built this little chapel, some years ago, when he was on the Cumberland mission. The process was as follows: he cut down trees; squared them; made them into a raft; let it float down stream; turned the boat into a floor, and the raft into a wall, and everything needed for a mission chapel was complete. Today, however, there is need of a cathedral; why, then, should poverty reign as undisputed mistress? Listen. The loud voice of



FIRST CATHEDRAL OF MSGR. CHARLEBOIS AT LE PAS. (Page 7).

the storm takes the place of the chime of bells that is not there. Inside, the bare walls show poverty and privation. priests to say Mass. There is no tabernacle, no monstrance, There are hardly the necessary requirements for three no ciborium; whence, then, does this Bishop, so happy to-day amid his wants, draw the true, pure happiness to be read in his face? From God, and from God only; since He alone can inspire, and give us to taste of such great things; happiness in the prospect of privations; joy awaiting sufferings.

THE PONTIFICAL MASS.

The Bishop, clothed in his pontifical vestments, begins High Mass at the throne, that is, in a plain chair, lent for the occasion, by a Catholic of the place. Father Renaud assists him at the altar, answers the Mass, and directs the ceremonies, which are of the simplest. One child carries the mitre, another the pastoral staff. Both have put on their best Sunday finery, for there are no choir-boys' habits at the cathedral as yet. They are proud of their duties; so proud, that they neither understand nor even see the signs made by the reverend master of ceremonies. Their youth must plead their excuse, and the fact that everything is new to them, nor has any one trained them, so far, for their exalted duties.

The Mass continues, attentive and solemn. Father Turquetil leads the singing, without organ or harmonium, helped out by many sympathetic and enthusiastic voices.

After the Mass, the Bishop returns to the throne, and Father Turquetil reads the bulls of our Holy Father, Pius X, appointing Mgr. Ovide Charlebois, O.M.I., as first Vicar Apostolic of Keewatin. There is no noise or movement of any kind. The voice that is being listened to, as it repeats the words of the Vicar of Jesus Christ, holds everyone's attention. In this wretched church, where poverty and privation reign supreme, between these four bare walls, something great and solemn is being done. Yes; it is certainly a feast day, and a great feast day. The reading ended,

Father Renaud presents an address in French to His Lordship, on behalf of all the missionaries. He tells the Bishop of the joy brought by his coming to all his sons in the priesthood, of the courage and strength wherewith his presence inspires all the missionaries who, left to themselves, have had so much of loneliness to endure; of the hope and certainty of success which His Lordship's zeal and experience ensure to the poor Indian missions they love so dearly. Lastly, he promises His Lordship their active and generous support in his endeavors to bring all souls "Ad Jesum per Mariam."

After him, Dr. Larose, a French Canadian Catholic, the oldest resident of Le Pas, reads a magnificent address to His Lordship. Even the Metis are anxious to express to the Bishop their joy at his final arrival among them, a joy uttered in their own language, Cree.

The Bishop rises, greatly moved, and answers, in turn, in French, in English, and in Cree. He speaks, and the tone of his voice, full of emotion and sincerity, makes it easy to understand him. He tells us how he bears us all in his fatherly heart, without distinction of race or speech. It is for all to live as true children of God, as true faithful, equally subject to the same pastor who loves them all alike. Therein, he says, is strength and happiness; therein, the salvation of souls.

Then they all bend, collected, and greatly moved, under the blessing hand of their pastor. The *Te Deum* rings out. Many, and strong voices proclaim the thanks of gratitude to God, who has deigned to remember and to visit His people.

RECEPTION OF THE CUMBERLAND MISSION.

On Saturday, March 11, 1911, the mission of Saint Joseph, Cumberland, was *en fête*. On the lake, a hedge of fir-branches made a road of honor; from the church, the joyous chime of the bells; as far as the mission, flags and banners floating on the wind; a brisk and well sustained firing of guns, which seemed to wish to drown the noise of the storm that was raging. All of which shows, plainly, what joy and happiness the first visit of His Lordship, Mgr.

Ovide Charlebois, O.M.I., Vicar Apostolic of these regions brings to the hearts of his former friends and faithful.

The Bishop arrived after a two days journey by dog-train, during which he had slept in the open air.

But we have come to the church; clean, bright and cheerful in its decorations. The Bishop takes his seat on an improvised throne, adorned with his escutcheon, with the motto: *Ad Jesum per Mariam*.

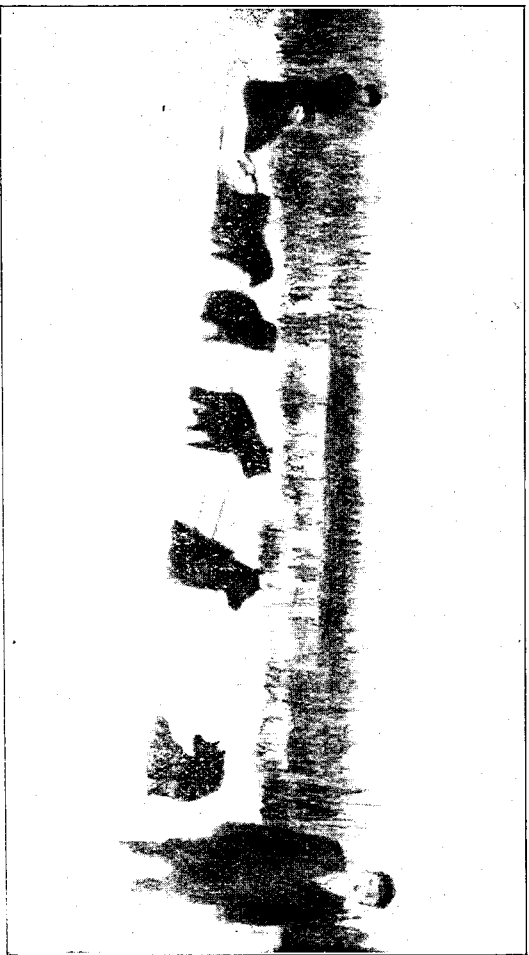
ADDRESSES.

Father Boissin, O.M.I., and the *métis* of the place present addresses, in turn, in French, in English, and in Cree.

We shall not attempt to analyse or to appreciate them, but shall, rather, listen to the Bishop's answer: "My children," he says, unable to withhold his tears, "I am too much moved to speak to you today; I will answer you tomorrow." His heart yields to so many, and so tender memories, which recall, not only the beginnings of his priestly and apostolic life, but the long past as well of labors and of conflicts. As Father Boissin said so warmly, but a while ago: "Today marks the return of a well-loved Father to his dear children; of a Father who spent the first years of his priestly life, sixteen years of trials and endurance, for the good of every one.

"It is the Great Chief of Prayer who returns today, to guide the younger ones, to put himself at their head, to encourage them by his example to embrace a yet harder life, because the field is far larger and wider, and covered on all sides with thorns and briars. And this life of greater sacrifices and a more earnest apostolate, how long shall it last! Ah! if the Good Master would but hear the prayers of all, missionaries and faithful of every speech and race, it would last until the fulfilment of the Good Shepherd's promise: *There shall be one fold, and one Shepherd*.

"This allusion to the great numbers of our separated brethren, to the still greater numbers of heathen who, in this vast vicariate, have not yet heard the Voice of Our



MSGR. CHARLEBOIS TRAVELS ON A "DOG-TRAIN".

Divine Lord, shows plainly, and in their full measure, all the sum of sacrifices, sufferings, and trials in store for the first pastor of these distant regions, the most difficult, perhaps, to visit and evangelize, considering the enormous distances which separate one mission from another and place them beyond the reach of the comforts and advantages of the civilized world.

“This is the great, the overwhelming task laid on our well-loved Shepherd. He has accepted it, and has adopted us as his children. From our hearts we thank him. And we wish for him that he may live this toilsome life, made up of labor and of trial, for long and many years; for we are sure of his courage, and we know his devotion and zeal. And our loving hearts desire greatly to follow him, to console him by our good will, and to help him, so far as we may be able, to lead souls *Ad Jesum per Mariam*.”

RETREAT

Thereafter, the Bishop gave Benediction of the Most Blessed Sacrament, and returned to the mission, our people never wearying of seeing him, and listening to him. He, on his part, yielding to the dictates of his heart, speaks familiarly to each and every one of them, as he used to do in the good days of his life as a missionary. His Lordship announces that he himself will preach the eight-days retreat to the Indians, from March 12th to March 19th, and these poor people break out into cries of joy and happiness. They had never dared to hope for this!

May this joy and happiness prove, for each and all of them, a salutary and effectual impulse towards good! May the Good Master Himself deign to stir up and to strengthen every heart! May He deign, also, to grant to the Bishop, in return for all his trials, his labors, the love he bears to all these souls, the grace to lead them *Ad Jesum per Mariam*.

Father Turquetil, O.M.I.,

Missionary at Caribou Lake.

Translation of the address in the Cree language, presented on behalf of the Métis and Indians:

“To Our Great Chief of prayer whom we love:—

Today seems to us a great day of rejoicing in our country here at Le Pas, in seeing thee come to us, My Lord, clothed with the greatness of Great Chief of prayer. We have heard for a long time that they wished to make thee Great Chief of prayer, in this country of the North. That is why we wearied to see thee come soon to our country. At last, today, it has come to pass that we see thee. Truly, we rejoice, and are grateful.

Thou didst treat us well, in former days, when thou wast a priest. Thou didst take good care of our souls. Often hast thou suffered greatly in order to come and visit us. Many times also hast thou taught us the good word (good conduct). Now dost thou consent once more to come and take care of our souls. Truly, we thank thee with all our heart.

In old days, we respected thee; still more, now thou art a bishop, we shall look on thee as our first father.

May it now please God that all thy children, the Métis who are here, may love thee and obey thee. We pray the Great Spirit to grant thee a long life, and that thou mayest be able to guide our lives on this earth in such wise that they may be able to attain the life eternal. Truly, from the depth of our heart, we rejoice to see thee again on this earth, and we thank the Giver of life for having allowed all to meet on this day.

Such are the sentiments of all the Catholics now living at Le Pas.

LOUISE MARSOLAIS.

Letter addressed to Mgr. Charlebois by the métis of his mission at Cumberland. (*Translation*).

The métis of Spruce Island (Cumberland), writing to the Great Chief of Prayer, Mgr. Charlebois.

Greatly do we rejoice at hearing it said that they wish to make thee Great Chief of Prayer. Each and everyone

of us gives thanks for this great news. We shall value greatly the spiritual care which thou shalt procure for our happiness. And, as far as we are able, we shall pray for thee. We shall order prayers (the Mass) in our church until the day that they shall make thee Great Chief of Prayer, and then we shall all go to the church to pray for thee. We greatly desire to see thee in our country when we go to pray during the night (to midnight Mass). God grant it may be so! We shall then spare nothing in order to greet thee fittingly. All, as we are today, we love thee for the good that thou hast done to us.

Once more, thou art ready to sacrifice thyself in order to take care of us. We thank thee for it from our very hearts. This is why we are all happy in coming to greet thee.

35 signatures follow.

L'Action Sociale of April 29, 1911.

FIRST PASTORAL VISIT MADE BY MGR. CHARLEBOIS.

Diary of the Journey.

Delmas, Sask., Canada, May 21, 1911.

I left my poor bishop's house at Le Pas on the 13th instant, in company with good Father Rossignol, O.M.I., who was on his way to Ile à la Crosse. The steamer landed us at Prince Albert the next morning in time to say our Masses. In the afternoon, I was at Duck Lake, in my dear Saint Michael's school. I was glad to see my good little Indians again, as well as the Fathers and the devoted Sisters of the Presentation. That evening, our happiness was made complete by the arrival of Mgr. Pascal, who came from Batoche, where he had been giving confirmation. This pleasure lasted over the whole of the next day; but I had to say good-bye to this much-loved institution, where I had spent seven good years of my life.

On the 16th, we were the guests of Father Vachon, O.M.I., at Saskatoon. My dear nephew, Father Arthur

Lajeunesse, O.M.I., came to enliven the conversation. The time passed quickly, and the hour for taking the train again sounded all too soon.

In passing by Battleford, Fathers Delucas and Paillé, O.M.I., joined us. We only had their company for two hours, but it was pleasant and agreeable. They all got out at the station at Delmas, even Father Rossignol; and I was alone for the rest of the night.

Early the next morning, I was being greeted by Mgr. Legal, Father Grandin and the whole of the Oblate community at Edmonton. Their welcome was sincere and cordial, and I felt that I was in the midst of affectionate and devoted brethren.

We soon reached Saint Albert. There, as at Edmonton, I was the recipient of a thousand kindnesses, especially on the part of Mgr. Legal. He did everything in his power to make my visit as pleasant as possible, and I was really overpowered by so many attentions and kindnesses. A graceful reception had been prepared at the Little Seminary, and at the convent of the Grey Nuns, where everything breathed of lively sympathy. I felt myself unworthy of it, which made me all the more grateful for it.

The hour for my return soon sounded, but I bore away in my heart a tender memory of my visit to Saint Albert.

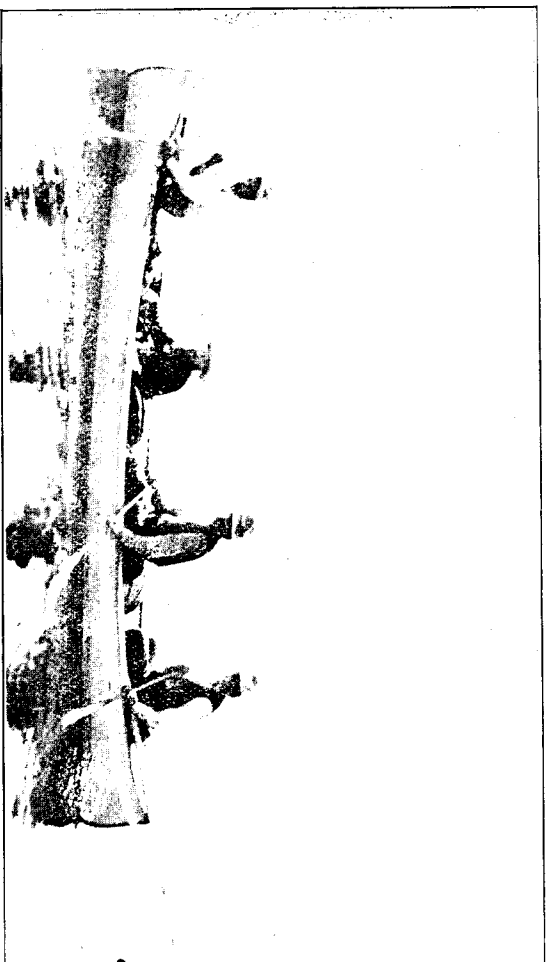
I stopped at the mission of Delmas, where I had left my companion, Father Rossignol. Here, as at Saint Albert, I was made the recipient of much kindness and generosity. Father Delmas, who is in charge of the mission, had made up his mind to do things on a grand and fitting scale. He had prepared a magnificent ceremony of confirmation, which took place this morning. His pretty little church was crowded with a somewhat cosmopolitan congregation: French, Canadians, English, Métis and Indians; he had some to suit everybody. Several young children had the happiness of receiving their Eucharistic God for the first time, and 61 were anointed with Holy Chrism. The singing was delightful. It was under the care of the good Sis-

ters of the Assumption, and rendered by their little Indian girls: (These Sisters have a wonderful boarding school for Indian children)

Good Father Delmas had the happy thought of making a collection on my behalf, and his good parishioners were more generous than ever. This will enable me to continue my journey; for I am undertaking a travel of more than 2000 miles with an empty purse, and a complete trust in Providence only. The religious ceremony was followed by a good dinner and by a charming reception at the school. It was the feast of the festival and of farewell to civilization, for I must start in a few moments on the road that leads to a wholly Indian country. "Many thanks, kind people of Delmas; thanks to your generous parish priest; thanks to your good and devoted Sisters!" And may God deign to reward the great charity you have shown me.

May 22nd (under the tent, near Sand Lake). First camp under the tent. It is delightful, near the edge of a little lake, remarkable for the clearness of its water. A breeze from the north drives away the mosquitoes, and gives us hopes of a good rest. It will be welcome, for we are tired out. We have been travelling, since yesterday, in a great box waggon without springs, over roads whose many rough places have never been smoothed. The jolts and bumps of all kinds that we have to undergo, from morning till night, may be imagined. Our guide is one of Father Delmas' good Indians. He is an excellent creature, with a reputation of always being happy and contented. He has a strong arm, and knows how to use a whip. His two little horses also know something about it.

We have come about 60 miles, across a country open to settlement. Less than ten years ago, it was an uninhabited desert. Now, there are farms and dwellings all along the road, and new built churches are rising here and there. Yesterday evening, we greeted that of Saint Hippolyte, where the good and devoted priest Father Julion, is doing much good, in spite of his great poverty. There is an old English Protestant a few yards from our tent.



MSGR. CHARLEBOIS ON HIS PASTORAL VISIT

They tell us he is the last white inhabitant of the region. Tomorrow, we shall say farewell to every trace of civilization, and enter on a wholly Indian country. My companion, Father Rossignol, is waiting for evening prayers. Goodnight to all!

May 23 (9 p.m.—at the tent door). What a day! What roads! What weather. We have been travelling since 5 o'clock this morning, through an immense forest over indescribable roads. It is a succession of swamps into which horses and waggon sank until we had to shoulder the wheels to get them out. The Scholastics at Ottawa would have christened this road, "Mud Portage." It certainly deserves the name. If only the weather had been calm and favorable, but it has been raining and snowing, at one and the same time, the whole day. This evening, it has grown calm; the clouds have vanished, and the sun has become bright again, in wishing us goodnight. One would think he wished to smile away the memory of the day's little trials.

We all need rest; one of our horses (Rougeau) is worn out, (*resté à plate* as the voyageurs say). Can he take us to Prairie Lake? I doubt it. Till tomorrow.

May 24 (*en route*). Our Indian is boiling the tea-kettle for dinner. The weather is uncertain; now bright and cheerful; now weeping, and watering us with its tears. It is a true emblem of human life: a succession of joys and sorrows. Poor Rougeau! he can do no more; he pays no more attention to the whip. He has made up his mind to go at a foot-pace and no faster.

This is the day set for my arrival at Prairie Lake mission; shall we get there in time? I am sure I hope so. We are still in the forest. We have not seen a sign of human life since yesterday morning: we have only the birds' song to greet us and give us courage.

3 p.m. (in our wagon). The horses are going so quietly that I am able to write at the bottom of the waggon. We have just come out of the forest, and in sight of a lovely, verdant valley—that of Prairie Lake. A long way off,

we can see two Indian cabins. Two horsemen ride after us, to make sure if it is really the Great Prayer Chief (the Bishop) who passes. They tell us that we are still seven miles from the mission. Heavens! when shall we get there, at the pace we are going? It is enough to send anyone to sleep. Good Father Rossignol is driving in nails without a hammer.

Good luck! Here is an Indian with two good horses. He offers to drive us to the mission. *Deo gratias!* Goodbye Rougeau! You will get in—when you can.

The mission at last. Good Father Cochin comes out of the church with his people, where they have evidently had Benediction of the Most Blessed Sacrament. He sees us coming, but does not recognize us.

8 p.m. The surprise has been complete: nobody expected us today. A hearty greeting to Father Cochin and his lay brother; then a good hand shake to all the Indians present, with much happiness on both sides.

Good Father Cochin gives us a heart-felt welcome, but his poverty will not allow him to do much. His house is of tree-trunks, coated with earth: the inside is all in one room. A small table and a few stools for chairs, make up all its furniture. For beds, we shall have our travelling blankets, spread on the floor. We shall not complain; rather, we are happy in sharing his poverty. Moreover, we see Our Lord beside us in a chapel which is but little, if any richer. "The servant is no greater than his Master." One must add, to Father Cochin's credit that he came here, four years ago, with nothing but his portable altar and the means of saying Mass. For the first year, he had to live with the Indians, and be satisfied with their food. Since then his Christians have helped him to build his chapel and his poor dwelling. Such devotion, such self-denial are worthy of the most heroic ages of the Church and of her missions.

Father Rossignol is snoring. I shall try to do likewise. Till tomorrow.

May 25. Ascension Day.

A beautiful feast-day. No one stayed at home; everyone was at church; about 350 in all. Pontifical Mass, with Father Rossignol as sole assistant, etc. Father Cochin was at the harmonium, and led the singing. (It should not be forgotten that he is a true artist in music). The ceremony was simple, but pious and beautiful of its kind. The poor Indians had their black eyes wide open; most of them had never seen a Bishop.

We had confirmation in the afternoon, in which 61 took part. Side by side with children of 8 and 9 years, came old men and women of 60, 70, and 75. It was beautiful and touching. Tonight, everybody is contented and happy. They will long remember the fair feast of the Ascension, 1911.

May 21. Once more *en route*. We are on our way to the mission of Green Lake, with Father Cochin as our guide. His two ponies go quietly but surely, yet the time passes quickly for all that, since the good Father has a fund of stories to enliven the conversation. The road is no better than the one I spoke of before. We have just forded a river. The two traces of the harness broke while the carriage was still in the water. You can fancy what sort of a figure we cut. We had to endure a certain amount of personal discomfort but it was only one little accident among many others. It did not check our gaiety, nor the flow of Father Cochin's aves.

May 27. I have just said Mass in the tent, and given confirmation to a young woman. There is an Indian camp here, two families of which are still heathens. Yesterday evening, we tried to draw them to our holy religion, but the moment of grace is not yet come. The Catholics are getting ready to follow us to the mission. It will be a pretty large caravan. The weather is cheerful, and our mood matches it. We have still 25 miles to go to Green Lake; still a great number of thoughts, where we shall have to get down, in order to let the horses pull out of them. However, they are calling me; we are off.

Opposite the mission of Green Lake, with only the width of the lake between us. We must wait for a boat, in order to get there. Listen! Dear Father Teston is tied to his bell, all the Indians are burning powder. It sounds like a battle between Russians and Japanese. Everybody is coming and going, shouting: "Kitchiyamhihewikimāw;! (The Great Prayer Chief—the Bishop). It is all joy and rejoicing.

In the boat. The fusillade continues, and even increases, till we seem to be in danger, as the bullets whistle past, and crisp the water in every direction. Yet we know that it is the expression of the joy of friendly and sympathetic hearts. I also feel that I am entering on the legion of my Vicariate, since, hitherto, I have been in the diocese of Mgr. Pascal.

The chapel stands well on the high bank of the lake, with the flag of the Sacred Heart floating beside it. Only the missionary's house looks poor and wretched. Here we are, close to the shore. Everyone comes down the hill, with good Father Teston in the lead. Now for a long "rosary" of hand-shakes!

9 p.m. The rest of the reception was more solemn: addresses in French and in Cree; processional entrance into the church, allocution, etc. Father Teston certainly does nothing by halves. The interior of his chapel is prettily decorated, and notably clean. He deserves a good mark. As for his house, it is poverty's self. Nor is his outlay a richer one. He has to restrain his appetite sometimes. And to think that he has lived like this for twenty years! Good-night! I am going to rest, but on what a bed!

May 28. Sunday. Pontifical Mass this morning, and opening of the Retreat for the Indians, with a large and edifying attendance. They listen to the addresses with their eyes no less than with their ears. They seem to be really eager for the word of God. Their respect for the Bishop is almost worship. It certainly recalls the faith of the early Christians.

June 1. The retreat has continued until this morning, in the best dispositions possible. All work has ceased, in order

that spiritual things only may be attended to. One of the trading companies had loaded a boat to be sent to Ile à la Crosse, but not a man would embark until the retreat was ended. The Protestant clerk was forced to be patient, and to watch his boat at anchor. General communion yesterday and today. At Mass, this morning, we had confirmation; 60 persons took part in it. A consecration to the Sacred Heart was then read, and in proof of their good resolutions, the men came to the Holy Table, and publicly promised to observe total abstinence. It was an act which must have been pleasing to the Heart of Our Lord. Everyone seems contented and happy; it is because they possess peace of conscience, the greatest of all treasures. May the Dear Lord deign to keep them long in this state of grace!

Everybody is getting his gun ready, so I must get my luggage ready, as we shall leave in an hour.

In the canoe. I have just left the mission of Green Lake. Our leaving was like our arrival; the same blessing, the same hand shakes, the same fusillade, the same emotions in one's inmost soul. It hurt me to see good Father Teston standing alone on the shore, watching our canoe disappear. It reminded me of my old loneliness at Cumberland, when I saw Mgr. Pascal leave, or one of my brethren, who had come to visit me. Who can tell the bitterness the poor missionary's heart feels at such a time!

So now I am on the water. No more railway-cars, no more carriages, no more wagon, but canoe, and canoe only, until my return to Le Pas, in October. Our guides are two good Indians, Mathias and Jean-Baptiste, and we are going down the Beaver river. The weather is fine, and the country beautiful. The mosquitoes are beginning to caress us with their little lancers, in order to remind us of the spirit of penance. It is time to say our office.

June 2. *In the tent.*

We have just pitched camp. What a day! It has rained torrents since the morning, but we kept on our way just the same, and through a number of rapids. How



MGR. CHARLEBOIS WITH HIS TWO INDIAN
GUIDES AFTER A SUCCESSFUL HUNTING
PARTY. (Page 23)

many times our canoe grazed rocks that would have knocked the bottom out of her. But our good Mother in heaven took care of us, and we are here this evening, all safe and sound, but pretty wet. Good night!

June 3. *In the Canoe.* We have just finished our meditation. The sun is very bright; doubtless, in honor of the feast of my patron, Saint Ovide! Hullo! an antelope! an antelope! Do you see him? He is crossing the river. How the men paddle! Father Rossignol is standing up, rifle in hand! It is a serious matter!

Bang! Bad luck! He has missed. Jean-Baptiste takes hold of the rifle. Bang! Missed again. Bang! Hurrah! He's dead! His neck is broken.

It has only taken twenty minutes to draw our prey to shore, to photograph, to skin it, and to put it in the boat. We are all glad to have some fresh meat. Only Father Rossignol's conscience troubles him for having missed his shot. At last we are opposite the school of Our Lady of the Sacred Heart at Lake La Plonge. Three miles still to go, but we can see it in all its attractiveness. It stands on a high butte, surrounding with fine trees, overlooking the Beaver river on which we are travelling.

Now we are nearer to it. Our man fires his gun. It is a war signal. They have seen us, and the firing is beginning again. We can already see the children drawn up in line on the edge of the water, with the good Grey Nuns in front of them. Father Ancel, O.M.I., is standing at the end of the wharf, while Brothers Burnouf, Auguste and Antoine, take part in the firing. It is all very touching, and reminds me of Saint Michael's school at Duck Lake. My eyes are ready to shed tears; but I must teach them to be more brave. Come! It is time to land and bless this charming little population.

In the evening. The remainder of the reception consisted of a good dinner, which was not the least practical part; then a charming performance given by the children. These little Indian boys and even the girls played their parts won-

derfully well. It was altogether delightful and they all deserved praise, as well as the good Sisters who have taught them. I was glad to give it.

June 9. I am still at the school, having decided to take my time in visiting this institution as, indeed, its importance required. I asked about everything, and to my great satisfaction, I find that much good is being done. I was greatly edified by the devotion and self-denial of the Sisters, as well as of the Fathers and the Brothers.

It is an inspiring sight to see priests and sisters exiled, as it were, in the midst of this great forest, and all devoted to the instruction and education of poor Indian children. Such devotion can be accounted for by the love of God, and the love of God only.

Our good lay Brothers are not less wonderful. What work they do! What services they render. Their ambition is to spend themselves wholly for the good of this undertaking. Their zeal has made them skillful to the extent of setting up a fine sawmill at the foot of a rapid, close beside the school. They use the same water-power to make electric light, and to carry water into the school. There is only one thing to be regretted—there are not enough of them, the overwork effects their health. It is greatly to be wished that the vocation of laybrothers were better known!

There are 44 children in the school at the present time, and the Sisters hope to have fifty before long. They are taught French and English, French chiefly. Good conduct and piety are held in honour. Most of the children go to Holy Communion every day; which is saying a great deal. I confirmed 34 of them this morning; it did one good to see them so pious and so well trained. Now, to bed; for we must continue our journey tomorrow.

June 11. We have just left the school. May God shed His blessings on it, and may Our Lady of the Sacred Heart prove its powerful protectress!

Six good Montagnais Indians from Ile a la Crosse are paddling our canoe. It seems that Father Rapet, O. M. I.,

asked for two to come and fetch us, and that ten volunteered. Six were chosen, who esteemed it a great privilege that some of the others would have been willing to pay for it. This shows the regard which these poor Indians have for the Bishop. Father Rossignol and I each have our own canoe, and have every attention paid us. They will hardly let us use our legs to land with.

The weather is disagreeable; there is a strong wind, with frequent showers. It does not, however, hinder our good Montagnais from paddling with all their strength.

Hullo! They are pointing out the little Hudson Bay Company's tug-boat, which is following us. Good luck! The captain is kind enough to fasten our canoes to his boat, and we spin along without paddling, like veritable gentlemen of leisure. We are already at the entrance of Lake Ile a la Crosse with only six miles to go to the mission. The wind, however, is too strong, and we have to wait for calm. Divine Providence has, it seems, allowed this, in order to give us time to go and visit a poor sick old woman, and to hear her confession.

The wind has dropped, and the boat is getting ready to start. We are allowed to fasten our canoes to it again.

Out on the lake. The waves are high, and make us rock, but there is no danger. It is even pleasant for those who are fond of sensations.

Now we can see the mission and the Company's fort; we are signalled already. A sustained salvo brings our first greeting. My heart is greatly impressed at the thought that, in a few minutes, I shall reach this mission of Ile a la Crosse, whose founders were Mgr. Tache, Mgr. Lafleche, and Mgr. Grandin. The memory of these great and holy missionaries fills me with a great respect for this ground on which their feet have trodden.

It is nine o'clock at night, but the sun has not disappeared here. Its rays are still reflected on the church, the presbytery, and the many Indian tents. Flags are floating on all sides; the boat gives a joyous call with its whistle, the



GROUP OF SQUAWS

firing becomes a veritable earthquake, the whole population is in a ferment. It is a most moving and impressive sight. Here we are, at last, close to the landing-place. Good Father Rapet gives us a hearty greeting; the firing grows louder, and becomes deafening.

I had hardly set foot on the shore when the whole crowd knelt down to receive my blessing, then, one after another, all, without exception, came to kiss my ring. With what faith they went through this ceremony! I was greatly edified. We then went to the Church where, naturally, there was an address and a reply, followed by Benediction of the Most Blessed Sacrament. Now, I have only to go to bed. Good night to all.

June 12. Sunday. What a beautiful and happy day! This mission is certainly the pearl of my Vicariate. There are large numbers of Indians, who are well disposed; fond of praying and of singing. Today's religious ceremonies were very beautiful; the singing wonderful and yet the organist is only an Indian woman, who plays very well. They tell me there are four others who are just as good. There are not many parishes of white people which can boast of having so many lady musicians.

This morning's Pontifical Mass was more solemn than the previous ones. Here at least I had two priests to assist me, both vested with handsome dalmatics. That is quite grand in this country.

The retreat for the Indians opened after High Mass. I preach in Cree for the Crees, and Father Rapet repeats my instructions in Montagnais for the Montagnais Indians. He has the advantage of being able to speak both languages equally well. As at Green Lake, the audience were all eyes and all ears in listening to what was said. It was both edifying and encouraging.

June 13. Father Ancel, the director of the school at Our Lady of the Sacred Heart, joined us this evening. Our community, therefore, consisted of a Bishop, three Fathers, and a lay-brother. This last, good Brother Poliquin, is

our cook and factotum. He is very modest, and does not attract attention, but he is useful, and his merits are great in God's sight. What a good thing it would be if we had one like him in every mission!

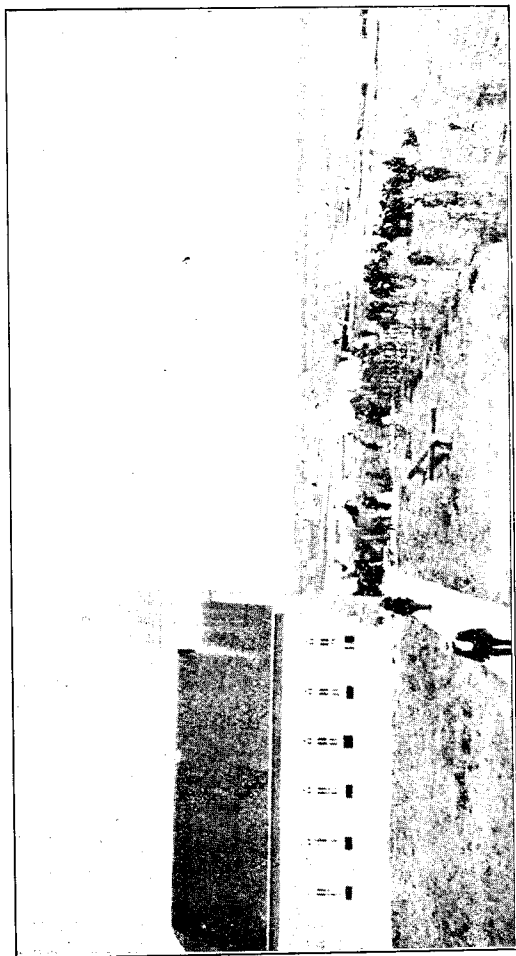
June 15. Thursday. Feast of the Most Blessed Sacrament. A well-filled day. Pontifical Mass, procession of the Most Blessed Sacrament, confirmation. 108 confirmed, general communion, reception of the Sacred Heart Scapular, three sermons, etc., etc. With all this to be done, there was not much time left for idle talk. We are all very tired, but our hearts are at peace, for we have been working for Our Dear Lord, and for the salvation of souls. And now, to sleep; since last night, we were in the confessional till after midnight.

June 16. Friday. General communion again this morning, with no lack of fervour. After Mass, a mission cross was blessed, and carried in triumph to the spot where Mgr. Grandin formerly set up a cross. It is on a lonely butte, which commands the whole neighborhood. This new cross will commemorate my first visit to Ile a la Crosse. May it prove a source of blessing to this dear mission.

And now I must get my luggage ready again, for the firing has begun, which is signal for our leaving. The crowd has gathered already, for the ceremony of shaking hands.

In the canoe: starting. One of my men: "Wah! Wah! Monseigneur, ca pete fort, hein!" It certainly does, for more than 200 guns and rifles are going off, anyhow. The echoes take a share in it; the result is a really fine "demonstration", which even outdoes the one in honour of our arrival, we turn a point, and lost sight of everything. Only the firing can still be heard.

"Ekwa aspui, l' Ile a la Crosse", cries a Metis in the front of the canoe. ("There goes Ile a la Crosse".) At the same moment he lifts his gun, and brings down a large gull. "There Monseigneur, and that will be thy supper." "Good, my son, I accept it." Proud of his suc-



MISSION OF ILE-A-LA-CROSSE. (Page 29).

cess, he bends his paddle and complains that it is not strong enough for him. He is afraid of breaking it.

This time I sat up like a veritable substantial citizen, thanks to the generosity of the good Christians of Ile à la Crosse. Father Rapet let it be known that I should need a canoe and two good rowers to take me to Portage La Loche, 150 miles away. Without any delay, a good old Montagnais came and said to the priest in my presence: "Last week I bought a canoe with my furs which cost me \$125.00. I have not yet tried it. If the king of England wished to have it from me, I should refuse, but for Monseigneur, it is there at his disposal." Nothing could be more gracious. The offer was accepted, and I am writing these lines in this famous canoe.

As for men, two were asked for and four volunteered. It was a case of *embarras du choix*. Father Rapet, in order to test their generosity, said to them: "Do you know that you will get no payment on your return, except a picture?" "What does that matter?" they answered; "the honour of accompanying the great Prayer Chief is sufficient pay." Three were chosen, instead of two; Martial, Francois, and Benoit; a Cree, a Metis and a Montagnais. Francois is in the bow at the canoe, Benoit in the stern, and Martial is my neighbor, in his capacity as cook. It is also his duty to provide for all my wants, so that I am travelling like a prince. It is something new to me. When I was a simple missionary I had to paddle, and to wait on myself. Yet I still sigh for the good time past. We have just met two canoes from Portage La Loche; I have received a letter from Father Pénard, O.M.I., who is longing for our arrival.

June 18. Sunday. On the shore of Buffalo Lake. The Sunday rest is kept in this country, even when travelling. It is the custom to stay in the same place, unless there should happen to be a good wind for sailing. As it is calm, we are obliged to stay in camp.

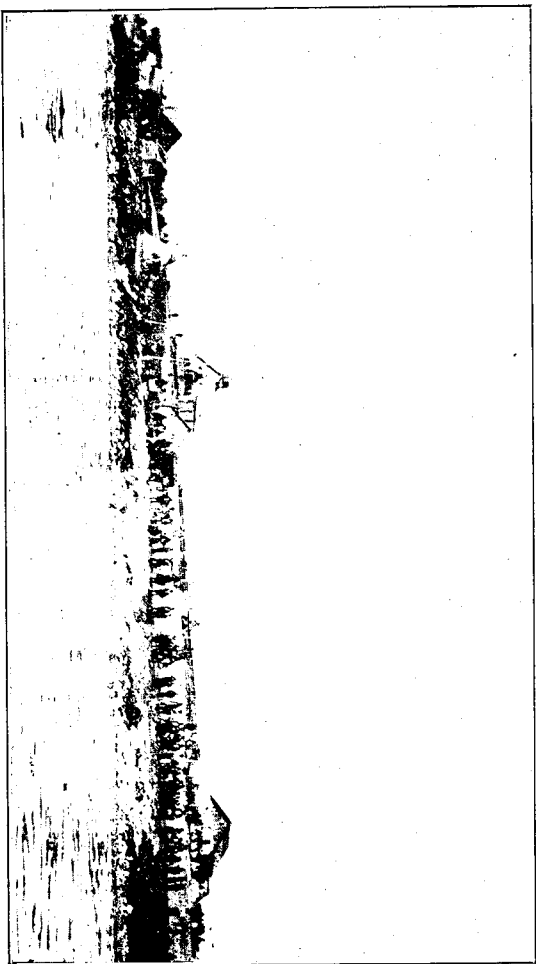
I said Mass under my tent, a happiness I have every morning. My men were present and sang hymns which the echoes repeated. Few know the pleasure and the happiness to be drawn from celebrating Holy Mass far from any dwelling, in a complete solitude, on the shore of a vast and magnificent lake, in perfect weather, under a poor little tent, and in the presence of three good Indians. It would be a subject for a beautiful poem. But the heart that faith inspires experiences feelings which surpass all the beauties of poetry. It has a better understanding at Our Dear Lord's goodness, and feels itself to be the nearer to His Divine Heart the farther it is from worldly things. Fervour is easy, to the extent of wishing that Mass could last all day long.

Noon. There is a light breeze which invites us to set sail. We shall take advantage of it.

June 19. At the end of a long portage. The men are taking the canoe up a number of rapids, while I have followed the land road. We are on the River La Loche, which is small, winding and full of rapids, with no attractions to offer. Nor is the surrounding country any better; it might well, indeed, be called "Holland", being nothing but a swamp full of water. It is difficult to find a place for a camp or a fire. The dry places are merely patches of sand, with nothing growing on them but cypress. There are large numbers of elk here; their tracks are to be seen almost everywhere, but we have not had the good luck to meet one.

Here are my men. They must have had hard work in the rapids, for they are all in a sweat.

June 20. We are wind-bound on the shore of Lake La Loche. The mission is opposite us, but we cannot get to it, which gives us an opportunity of making acts of resignation. The clouds of mosquitos seem desirous of making our lot still harder. As for Benoit, he takes it out on the ducks. Pity any who fly within reach of his gun. Francois, again, takes his pleasure in scraping his face with an



MISSION OF PORTAGE LA LOCHE. (Page 35).

old razor, in the hope of raising some sort of a beard. Six in the evening. I have just had a supper of fresh duck, thanks to Benoit. As the wind is going down, we shall probably be able to start presently.

June 21. At the mission of the Visitation, Portage La Loche. We succeeded in crossing yesterday, in spite of the wind and the waves but it was after ten o'clock when we landed. I need not say that there was firing, as usual. There seems to be an idea that the Bishop's visit would not be valid without that.

On landing, I found the whole population of 450 Indians kneeling in two rows, from the lake to the missionary's house. After the usual blessing, all remained in the same position until after every one had kissed my ring. Not one of them failed to make the sign of the cross, before kissing the episcopal ring. One could see that they were moved by a spirit of faith; it was a most impressive sight.

This morning, they were all present at Mass. The chapel was not large enough to hold them, though they were all crowded together, without even a passage in the middle. I was touched to see them praying so piously, and singing so heartily and earnestly. It goes right to one's heart, and brings tears, at times, to see these poor wood-dwellers so good and so religious.

Portage La Loche is an historical spot, for it was here that the missionaries used to pass, in former days, from the Athabaska and from the Mackenzie. It is twelve miles long, and divides the waters of the Churchill basin from those of the Athabaska river.

Certain Canadian adventurers came here, in former days, and made alliances with the Montagnais. That is why so many of these Indians or Metis have Canadian names, such as Ianvier, Laliberte, Bouvier, etc. But they are Canadian only in name, and in the spirit of faith. Their manners and their speech have become Indian.

Father Pénard, O.M.I., has charge of this mission,

with Brother Pioget as assistant. As a matter of fact, he founded it some twenty years ago, and has lived there since in the utmost poverty. His dwelling is a miserable hut, more fitted to shelter animals than human beings. For several years, indeed, he was compelled to live in an Indian hut. He must truly, have had devotion and self-denial in order to preserve in such a way and for so long a time. The Chapel is a little better, but how poor it is, for all that! It has never known a coat of paint; it has neither benches nor chairs. In that respect, at all events, it bears some resemblance to Saint Peter's at Rome. Our Lord must think Himself in the stable at Bethlehem again. Yet it hurts, all the same, to see Him so poorly housed.

June 23. If good Father Pénard is not able for his poverty, he is not less notable for his zeal in giving these Indians moral instruction. He is a pattern missionary in this respect. He studies himself, and tries to have his knowledge with others. If one method fails, he invents another. He was almost the first to introduce frequent, and even daily Communion among the Indians. The results are wonderful; an increase of faith, an improvement of manners; fewer sins. He is very happy over it all, and keeps repeating: Hurrah for Daily Communion.

Today we held a regular examination of the Children, big and little, who are to be confirmed. They came before us, one after the other, to undergo a questioning on the catechism. I was really astonished at their answers. Sometimes, it was almost like an examination in theology. A small boy of five and a half answered all the principle questions of the catechism without hesitation. It was wonderful to hear him. I could not do otherwise than admit him to Communion and to Confirmation.

June 25. Sunday. A day of ceremonies. Pontifical Mass, *sui generis*. Confirmation, reception of the Sacred Heart Scapular, Benediction of the Blessed Sacrament, etc. It was all very modest, but the poor Indians were pleased and happy over it. There were 100 confirmed. Brother Pioget does great work in this mission; he is can-

tor and musician, fisherman, cook, sacristan, etc., etc. What merits he must have in the sight of God.

June 26. In my canoe again; on the way back to Ile a la Crosse. We have just left the mission with the customary ceremonial. I sincerely regretted leaving the Father and the Brother in such utter want. They had hardly anything left to eat. I trust that Providence may provide for their subsistence.

June 30. Ile a la Crosse. Here I am back again, after a safe journey, but not a pleasant one. Wind, rain, and cold all set themselves to withstand us. The chief thing, however, is that we are safe and sound. May God be praised and thanked for it!

July 3. In the canoe on Ile a la Crosse lake. I have just left the mission, and can still see it, standing fair and attractive, on the lake-shore. Goodbye, brave and devoted missionaries. Goodbye, good and kindly Indians! May the Sacred Heart and His Divine Mother be good to you! May they pour down on you the richest blessing of success and salvation! May our Holy Bishops Tache, Lafleche and Grandin from their place in heaven, bless this land, the first scene of their apostolate!

Here comes a whole flotilla of canoes to meet us; Montagnais, probably, returning from hunting. Each man has his sail hoisted, making a pretty sight. Now they have caught sight of us. Needless to say, there will be firing. Now they come nearer, and we shall have to go through the ceremony of shaking hands. They would think themselves guilty of a serious fault if they passed straight on without kissing my ring.

The ceremony is over, and the firing begins again, as a parting greeting. In one of the canoes there is a poor old woman who is very ill. She can hardly lift her hand to touch mine. It is most pitiful.

Who would have believed it? It turns out to be a Montagnais family which, having come too late to greet me on leaving, has followed us for three long miles, against a

strong wind, in order to touch my hand. There are not many whites who would have done as much. They go back happy, and the good old man fires his gun, in token of farewell.

There is another canoe coming after us, and making signs for us to stop. What is it? We must have forgotten something, and they are bringing it to us.

While on the subject of Ile a la Crosse, I must not omit a fact which I found very edifying. Some fifteen years ago a good Cree Indian woman, living at Lac Canot, a small mission served from Ile a la Crosse, became a widow. Unlike other Indian women, she had no thought of marrying again, but gave herself up to piety and to good works. Not only did she bring up her children in a Christian manner, but wished to help other parents to do the same. To this end she became a catechist. On Sundays she collected the whole of the small population of the neighborhood, had hymns sung, recited the Beads, and read passages from the catechism, or from the book of prayers. If she saw anyone do wrong, she corrected them charitably, or told the missionary of it, when he came to visit the mission. Everyone respected and listened to her, and went so far as to give her the title of "Okiskinohantakem" (Mistress"). At last, finding herself growing old und unable to fulfil her duties of mistress any longer, she specially trained one of her daughters with one of her girl-companions, in order that they might be fit to take her place. It was done, and her daughter now teaches under her inspection. Thanks to her devotion, it is said that this little mission of Lac Canot is one of the best. The Indians are well instructed in their religion and live as good Christians. They all came to Ile a la Crosse for the retreat, where their behaviour was most edifying. I had the happiness of seeing this good old mistress, whom I congratulated and encouraged.

July 4. In the tent. 9 p. m. A good day. We have come more than 60 miles, in spite of stormy and unpleasant weather.

On leaving Ile a la Crosse Lake, we came into the Churchill river, which carries its waters as far as Hudson's Bay. The lake is the reservoir which feeds it. The river itself is not large at its source, but it gradually becomes of a respectable size. It is chiefly remarkable for its rapids, which are numerous and sometimes very long.

We have shot about ten of them today. It was pleasant and exciting. Many novices in the art of travelling would have been glad to be in my place. Others, and more timid ones, would have thought themselves lost, and there would have been plenty of acts of contrition.

We have just camped, and the weather has turned fine again. Close by, is a Montagnais family out hunting, who have already killed an elk. They have just given us a large piece of dried meat, as black as leather. We shall eat it with pleasure. Goodnight!

July 5. In the canoe. Heavens! how hot it is! The sun is fairly roasting. We have just passed a Montagnais camp, where we had an excellent breakfast of young duck. It has given my men strength, they are paddling to make their paddles bend. The good Montagnais who received me in his tent, was pleased to do things in style. He first spread a cloak on the ground, on which he put a box, covered with a blanket, and with his own pillow for a cushion. The whole looked clean enough; but I know that the blanket and pillow were infested with vermin. I should have preferred the bare box, but, in order not to displease my host, I sat down, regardless of the consequences. The same Indian, seeing that my provision box looked very poor, offered me his in exchange. "Thou wilt lose by it", I told him, "for thine is well painted, finished, and strong." "No matter", he answered, "I shall be happy to exchange it, to do thee a pleasure." The bargain was struck, to my great joy. Then he opened his box, to take out the contents. What a smell! What dirt in the inside! And to think that I shall have to put my food in it! I was nicely

taken in! Another proof that one must not always trust the outside only of things and persons.

We are still travelling in the Churchill, but, presently, after having shot several fine rapids, we shall leave it to take another route by the way of the lakes. It is shorter and less dangerous.

There! My Leon has just made a good shot, but such a cruel one, at the same time! A good mother osprey had two dear little young ones, which she coved with all her heart. Also, at sight of our canoe, she knew that there was danger for her two darlings so she set herself to beg for pity and mercy. She might easily have dived and escaped all danger for herself, but she seemed to say to us: "Here I am, kill me, if you wish to, but I will not forsake my two dear ones." She stayed at her post accordingly, until our canoe was only a few yards away. Then Leon coolly, and without pity, blew her brains out with a shot from his gun. I was moved to compassion but it is our only means of getting meat. It should be said that it is not very dainty meat, for few care to eat osprey; but, in case of necessity one is not so particular.

July 7. The heat continues, and is made more pleasant (!) by frequent showers of rain, with thunder and lightning. We have, moreover, to make our portages while the water is still hanging to the leaves of the trees which is hardly to the taste of novices in travelling. My poor men are exhausted, and I am not in much better care myself, though I have not worked so hard as they have. We are camped in a very damp spot, and I have had to make a sort of wooden floor in order to sleep dry.

July 8. A hard day! Several portages to make, a good many rapids to shoot, lakes to cross, and all in tropical weather. But the best of it was that our guide lost his way on the big lakes. (He was not to blame, having gone that way once, eleven years ago.) We had to travel about fifteen miles for nothing. In order to make up for lost time, and to keep my men from getting discouraged, I used my paddle almost all day, which I had not done for nine

years. I have not lost the trick of it, but I am not so strong as I used to be, so I am very tired this evening. They say that, in such a case, a hard bed is the best place for sleeping. If so, I shall sleep well, for I shall sleep on a rock.

July 9, Sunday. In the tent. What a day! A regular storm of rain and wind since last night, and quite impossible to travel. I hoped to arrive at Lake La Rouge early this morning, to say Mass for the few Catholics who there, but there is no use thinking of it. I cannot leave the tent in such weather. I took advantage of it to sleep on my rock till 8 o'clock. My own opinion, I must say, is that a feather bed is a better remedy for fatigue than a stone one.

It was a great consolation to me to be able to celebrate Holy Mass today. I did so, in very poor surroundings, but as piously as possible. There was nothing to hurry me, so I was able to prolong my happiness, and to pray more particularly for all who are dear to me, relations, friends, and benefactors. I trust my prayers will be heard.

July 10. Lake La Rouge. In the tent. This morning, about 9 o'clock, we were able to resume our journey, in spite of frequent showers.

We had to make portages, and to shoot dangerous rapids, where the canoe narrowly escaped being wrecked on the rocks. But the climax of the day was an improvised portage. My guide having failed to find the real portage, we had to improvise one of our own, and I must honestly say that it was not a success. We had the pleasure of floundering about in the mud and water up to our knees for more than two hours, and then harness ourselves to the canoe like beasts of burden. In order to keep my shoes dry, I left them in the canoe, and made use of the white shoes of our first parents. As they are not very thick, they came in for a good many scratches in the bushes. Luckily the weather undertook to mend them cheaply.

We have only about twenty Catholics here, lost in a crowd of heretics. At one time, they were for more than

ten years without seeing a priest, but they kept their faith, nevertheless, in spite of the vexatious efforts of the Protestant minister. For some years past, the missionary from Pelican Lake comes to visit them twice a year. They have built themselves a pretty little chapel where they meet on Sundays for prayers and hymn singing. They are poor and wretched, but their faith is firm and active. The minister no longer tries to pervert them, for he knows by experience that it is time lost. I found a poor old man very ill. He cried for joy at sight of me, for he was afraid of dying without seeing a priest. He has never been confirmed, although he is fully 70. I have just held a catechism class for all of them, in order to prepare them for confirmation. Just now, however, it is time for a little rest.

July 11. (Still in the tent). I am still at the same place. I have said Mass in the sick man's hut: dimensions ten feet by ten; a low dirty tent, as black as a stove. There were fourteen of us there, two being stretched on their bed, or men came and told me he would go no farther, he had work room I had for saying Mass. However, I succeeded, and gave seven confirmations as well. The good old sick man shed warm tears at the moment of Communion and of Confirmation. His soul was filled with joy, while his body was suffering. His poor old wife was beside him, suffering also, and unable to walk. It was touching to see them. After the ceremony, I was getting ready to start, when one of my rather, a wretched pallet. It is easy to fancy how much at home and must go back. A nice state of affairs! And he was hired for a month and a half! What am I to do! I must send back my two rowers, and hire others here. Two of our Catholics are willing to come with me, but they have no canoe. They have gone to look for one, while I write these lines. Ah! There they are, coming back. They have found a canoe to be sure, but it is old and rotten, and not too safe. But we must start at all hazards.

July 13. (Under sail on the Churchill river). There is a saying "Good luck after hard luck," and our case

proves it. The Dear Lord seems to wish to make me forget my misfortune at Lake La Rouge. Since we left, we have had a fair wind and have travelled under full sail. There is nothing finer or more pleasant. You get over long distances in a short time and without tiring yourself.

We are once more on the Churchill river, which has grown wide and majestic. Now and then it narrows, and gives us a sight of magnificent rapids that would send a Yankee into extasias of admiration. Personally, we should prefer to do without them, and not to have to carry arms and baggage over the portages. The country bordering the Churchill is picturesque, and may possibly offer hopes to mining prospectors, but it will have no attractions for farmers. It is a continuous succession of more or less lofty rock, some bare, others covered with a low growth of aspens or cypress. Arable land is scanty and of small extent. It is preeminently a country of elks and fur-bearing animals.

A large black bear has just shown up on the crest of one of the rocks, amusing himself, apparently, in making his rounds. We would give a good deal to shoot him, but have no rifle, nor even bullets for our shotgun. Yet our men wish to give him a charge of lead, at all events. They accordingly land, one with the gun in his hand, the other with the axe. There is not much chance of their getting him; in fact, they are coming back, quite unhappy. The clever beast was sharp enough to see them coming, and prepared to go and to take his pleasure in the depths of the forest.

We have just passed the Chaudiere rapid, one of the largest on the Churchill; I took a snap-shot of it, successfully, I hope. We are now camped at the entry of the Caribou river, which is the discharge of the famous lake of the same name. As we shall have to go up the whole length of it, I trust the good Lord will give us a fair wind to fill our sail!

July 14. In the tent, at the mountain rapid. My wish of yesterday evening has not been realized. A strong head

wind has forced us to paddle all day. As my men could not make way against it by themselves, I was obliged to use my paddle, with the result, that, this evening, all my limbs are aching. About 4 in the afternoon, we were at a loss in which direction to steer our canoe, for my guides have never travelled on this river, and I have not been over it for 22 years. Accordingly, we went in some difficulty, when, all at once, we heard a shot on the opposite bank, to our great delight, as may be imagined. It turned out to be ten Montagnais who were going up the same river as ourselves, with a barge full of goods for the Hudson's Bay Company.

They are bound for the same destination as I am, namely Saint Peter's mission on Lake Caribou. No meeting could have been more fortunate. We have travelled together since then, so that we have had no further anxiety as to the road to be followed. They have just finished carrying their goods and their barge over the portage: for the rapid is too long to go up. They carry their goods on their heads by means of long straps of leather known as "collars", and drag the barge over the ground. The poor Indians harness themselves to it by means of their collars, and you see them straining at it like very beasts of burden. It is a pitiful sight; but never a word of complaint on their part. Rather, there is a prevalent note of gaiety. Till tomorrow!

July 15. In the canoe. A strong head wind again, and no luck. Fortunately, our good Montagnais have been kind enough to lend us one of their men to act as our guide, and to help us with the paddling.

We have gone on in front of them, as I am bent on reaching the entrance to Lake Caribou this evening, to spend the morrow, Sunday, there, as we have a small group of Indians there. In any case, it is the day set for my arrival at that place and I am set on getting there in time, being all for punctuality.

July 17. In the canoe. The day was so well spent, yesterday, that I had no time for writing: High Mass, two

sermons, catechism, confession. It was almost midnight before I could say my vespers.

I sang Mass alone: that is to say, with the help of the Indians. The church was nothing but a wretched Indian hut; my throne a dirty old box and my altar a table of the same quality. Those present all sat on the ground, except the one who posed as cantor, who was seated on a tub by my side. I had just room to move about from my throne to the altar, namely, about six feet. This is how I sang Pontifical Mass.

This morning, I said Mass again, and gave Confirmation with the same simple ceremonies, which nevertheless, gave happiness and pleasure to our Christians. With them, to have seen the Bishop, is almost to have seen our Lord Himself. They have great and sincere faith. I hope that most of them will have a high place in heaven in spite of their poverty and their dirt.

We are travelling at present on the beautiful Caribou lake. We make quite a flotilla, three barges and four canoes; two other barges have arrived from Cumberland, bound for Caribou Lake, all loaded with goods for the Hudson's Bay Company's stores. I am happy to meet Indians here from my old mission at Cumberland. They have brought with them the newspapers for the Fathers at Caribou lake. I have got hold of them, and am enjoying myself reading the news of the months of April and May last. It really is news to me.

Between whiles, I let my line drag at the side of the canoe, and have the luck to catch some fine trout of five or six pounds weight. I have four already in my canoe.

This lake is 200 miles long, and the mission is at the extensive north of it. It is noted for the clearness of its waters, and the number of its islands, which are crowded each winter with thousands and thousands of caribou, coming to feed on the white moss which grows here in great quantities. It well deserves its name of Caribou Lake. In spring, these same caribou disappear, in order to spend the

summer on the shore of the Arctic Ocean, whenever they return at the beginning of winter. We are accordingly denied their presence and, chiefly, the pleasure of having a shot at them.

In camp, on the edge of the lake, with calm weather, and the sun still shining on the tree-tops. It is beautiful and poetic! The men are amusing themselves on the sand of the lakeshore. Some of them are hunting porcupines. They have brought two already, which they are skinning, to make a feast. These little animals are very plentiful in this part of the country. They are easily hunted, since, having very short legs, they can only run slowly. All that is needed is an axe or a stick to knock them down. But they are just as fast in climbing trees as they are slow and heavy on the ground. They climb, in order to feed on cypress or aspen branches. They also take shelter in trees when they are chased by a wolf or a fox. Another means of defence is the long quills with which their backs bristle. If, when closely chased, they have no time to climb a tree, they stop, bend their heads under their bellies, and leave only their backs exposed. Then, woe betide the wolf who dares to attack them! All he will get is a mouthful of quills he cannot get rid of, and which often cause his death. These porcupine quills are much prized by the Indians who stain them different, and use them to decorate the tops of their shoes.

July 20. At Porcupine Point. At 6 o'clock a.m. Seated on the lake shore and a little depressed.

We have now done three quarters of the lake. We sailed here, yesterday and last night. The other two barges were, however, separated from us in the darkness by a heavy squall. We do not know what has become of them, but are waiting, hoping that they may rejoin us. What troubles me most is that one of the vanished barges contains my portable chapel, so that I am unable to celebrate the Holy Sacrifice of the Mass this morning. It is the first time since I left Le Pas, and if the barge is lost! Goodbye my chapel

and the things needed for administering confirmation! I have enough to make me thoughtful and worried.

9 a.m. No news of our two barges, but we are starting nevertheless. 11 a.m.; in the barge. Deo Gratias! We have found, on our way, the two barges we thought lost. They were in front of us. Those in charge of them, being anxious on our account, were waiting for us, so we were all safe and waiting for each other. In any case, we cannot get on, as the wind has become too strong. We are still fifty miles from the Mission; a good breeze would take us there.

July 21. At the Mission. Providence sent us the wished-for want of wind. At eight o'clock, last evening, the wind went down a little, and made it possible to launch our boats. But it was a trying night. Personally, I spent it crouched up in a corner of the boat, on some flour-sacks, exposed to the rain and the tread of the men, and was nearer to fainting than to sleeping. The main point was, however, that we flew over the water, and were within sight of the mission at 5 o'clock this morning. By half past six I was at the altar.

Good Father Egenolf saw us a long way off on the lake. He had time to draw up his Indians in two lines, to greet me, and to receive my blessing. As usual there was no lack of firing. Flags and pennons floated on the wind, in token of the joy of every heart present. Personally, I was glad to see my dear Father Egenolf again, in good health, whom I had only known four months. He has borne this isolation like a gallant missionary, while displaying great zeal for the spiritual welfare of the Indians. I am pleased with him, and so God must be, too.

July 26. 3 p.m. In the barge once more. We have just left the mission, and I can still see it over yonder. I have spent five days there, which have been so fully occupied, that I have not even given a thought to my diary. Yes, five days well spent; from 4 in the morning till 10 or 11 at night. We had to deal with three hundred and fifty In-



CAMP OF THE REV. FATHER TURGEON, O.M.I., ON HIS WAY TO THE
ESQUIMAUX. (Page 49).

dians, with whose welfare we were concerned. We had, therefore, to preach, to catechise, give interviews, hear confessions, etc. I took charge of the Crees, and Father Egenolf the Montagnais. I preached to the latter through an interpreter. The task has been a strenuous one, but we had many consolations. It was beautiful to see the faith and the childlike simplicity of these good Indians. We could have kept them in church all day, and they would not have found the time too long. Some white people might learn a wholesome lesson from them. All the parents attended catechism as regularly as the children. They are ignorant, but at least they desire to learn. One hundred and ten received confirmation.

Two chiefs and their councillors had the duty of keeping order in church and in their camp. It was good to see how they took their task to heart; no regular policeman could have shown more zeal. And, with all their vigilance, they could only find one disorder—some small children who were playing too noisily in the camp. Father Turquetil, O.M.I., who is in charge of this mission, is away. He left on Easter Monday, with three Indians on a journey of exploration on Hudson's Bay, to find a suitable spot for the establishment of a mission intended for the evangelization of the Eskimos. His three Indian companions were to return a month after they left. Yet we were now at the end of July, and with no news of our explorers. My anxiety on their behalf may be imagined. They might have perished by the way, and we might never know what had become of them. This thought followed me even in my sleep. I regretfully saw the hour of leaving come, for I had no news of my dear Father Turquetil. But God's Providence is good! Yesterday evening, at 8 o'clock, on coming out of church, we heard a number of shots, from the side of the Bay opposite the mission. The Indians at once said that it was someone in distress, and calling for help. It can only be a stranger, as all our people are here. Two men immediately got into a canoe, and made towards the spot whence the call came.

Shortly afterwards they came back, bringing Father Turquetil's three companions. Full of joy, I thanked God with all my heart. The joy in the camp was even greater: wives, parents, and friends, shed tears of happiness.

Father Turquetil sent me a long account of his journey and of his hopes for the future. The report was dated at Fort Churchill, where he was the guest of Mr. Starnes, chief of police, and his wife. I had met the parents of this lady in Montreal, the previous winter; she is a devout Catholic, and is delighted, it seems, to have a priest, and to be able to receive Holy Communion every day. Father Turquetil tells me it took him 21 days to get there, and that he only had provisions with him for ten. He and his companions lived, the rest of the time, by hunting, but chiefly on nothing. His companions did the same, on their way back. It took them 33 days in canoe by very rapid rivers. More than once, they were nearly lost. At last, finding no more navigable streams, they abandoned their canoe and walked for three days through the forest. It was pitiful to see them, they were so thin with want of food and fatigue, and ravenously hungry.

I am going away with my mind at rest, now that I know they are all alive. My only regret is in leaving good Father Egenolf alone for an indefinite period. When, however, I told him of my anxiety, his answer was: "Don't worry, Monseigneur, God will be my companion and my keeper. So long as I remain alone here out of obedience, I have nothing to fear." I was much heartened by such beautiful sentiments, and blessed him, with all my soul, while giving him a brotherly hand-grip.

Now we are under sail again. Were it not for my depression at leaving, I should feel inclined to sing: "What a fine wind! What a lovely wind!" "V'la le bon vent! V'la le joli vent!"—What a fine wind, indeed, swells our sails, and sends us along at twelve miles an hour!

The Hudson's Bay Company's clerk has been kind enough to place his barge at my disposal, for crossing the

lake. It is a great advantage, especially in the matter of safety. A mere canoe is always dangerous on so large a lake.

July 27. 6 p.m. In the barge. We still have the benefit of a good wind, and nothing could be pleasanter. It has rained torrents, however, since noon, which is not so pleasant. We have already done three quarters of the lake, and could reach our destination during the night, were it not for the rain which makes it necessary for us to camp.

July 28. In Camp, 9 p.m. The deluge of rain still continues, and doesn't seem in a hurry to come to an end. There is no possibility of leaving our tents, so we must make up our minds to spend the day thus on the wet ground, and wrapped up in our blankets, as it is cold. To tell the truth, one might easily imagine a more poetical state of affairs.

August 4. Saint Gertrude's Mission, Pelican Lake. My journey from Caribou Lake to this mission was quite uneventful, hence the absence of entries in my diary. The mission has been in existence for 33 or 35 years, and was founded by the venerable and zealous Father Bonald. When he first came here, there were only heathens and Protestants. Now, there are no heathens, and very few Protestants, but 500 good Catholics instead. This good priest was taken away from his devoted Indians in 1900 in order to found Holy Cross Mission, at Cross Lake, on the river Nelson, about which we shall have something to say later on. It was then that I had the honor and the happiness to succeed him in this mission. I say happiness, for he left such good and respectful Christians behind him, that it was a real joy to be among them. My stay was, however, only a short one, and father Rossignol took up the work begun by Father Bonald. Father Guilloux is in charge of the mission at the present time, with Father I. Renaud as his assistant. My arrival here was a very quiet one, as I was not expected so soon. Every one was taken by surprise, and had no time to get out his gun. The ringing of the church bell was the only notice of my arrival, and brought the whole population to the church, where Father Guilloux presented

me with an address. There was, unfortunately, no reply made to it; my joy at seeing these good Indians again, whom I had loved so dearly, and the sight of the church which had cost me so much toil and labor were too much for me, and the tears came instead of words.

Benediction of the Most Blessed Sacrament, however, gave me fresh courage and, in leaving the church, it gave me unspeakable happiness to shake hands with everybody. It really was an unspeakable happiness, for them and for me, to meet again after eight years of separation, and under such circumstances. There is no telling the deep and firm affection which exists between the missionary and his dear Indians.

I am now preaching a little retreat to them, as I have done at the other missions. They are regular in their attendance at the exercises, and I have no difficulty in getting myself listened to. They really do seem to be eager for the word of God. The mothers of families, in order not to miss the exercises, bring their babies with them, who, now one and now another, now all together, get cross, and try who can scream loudest. The music is, of course, delightful for the preacher!

I preach frequent, and even daily Communion to them. This seems to surprise them a little, as they feel themselves unworthy of such intimacy with their Eucharistic God; but they obey, and the good effects are beginning to be seen.

Perfect order reigns in the village. Three duly appointed policemen are always on duty. The only prevailing disorder and scandal come, not from our Indians, but from three or four white men, in the employ of the trading company. They pass their time in filling themselves with brandy, in fighting, and stirring up others to evil. Luckily, they are not always well received. One of them is in bed today, as the result of a thrashing received on his last night's rounds. If only the lesson could convert and amend him!

The harm done by these degraded whites among our Indians is beyond belief. They are a veritable plague.

Thank God, we have beautiful and good souls to set beside these degraded beings. They are hidden, indeed, under a darker and coarser skin, but they are not the less precious in the sight of God—that is our consolation.

August 10. While the men are boiling the water for the tea. I have just left our dear mission of Saint Gertrude, but can still see it. Father Guilloux, who is to be my travelling companion, has forgotten to bring hosts for our Masses and has gone back to get them. Meanwhile, the men are making tea, and I am writing this sitting on a big stone. My heart is still full of the emotions caused by leaving; the separation was more painful to me in this case than in any other. It has cost me much to go away from my good Christians and from good Father Renaud. I would gladly have stayed among them, and gone on doing them good, remaining unknown to the rest of the world. I envy the lot of the missionaries at these posts, and regret the sweet belfry! shall I ever see you again. Truly, I hope so, but there are many bitternesses to be undergone between now and that happy day.

There comes Father Gilloux. We shall now discuss a white fish, and then continue our journey.

In Camp. My tents are pitched near a charming rapid, the sound of which will help to send us to sleep. Meanwhile Robi, one of the guides, is telling us stories. "When Father Bonald came to the mission of Saint Gertrude," he says, "we were still all pagans. Our medicine man was an old man of the name of Siwap. One fine day, a woman fell ill. Thereupon Siwap got his tent ready to practise his healing magic. Having put himself into the costume of Adam he went in, confident of being once more able to show his wonderful power.

"He began his cadenced songs, his cries, his supplications to his unseen spirits, but nothing happened; the tent which ought to have shaken, remained still; the voices which

ought to have been heard, were dumb, the bells which ought to have shaken, were silent. Then the poor wretch cried out in despair: 'There is some one round my tent who hinders my spirits from coming. Drive him away, drive him away.' Father Bonald, who had come up, answered him: 'It is I who am here. I shall not go away. Let us see if thou art more powerful than I. Make thy tent shake, make thy spirits speak, make thy bells ring; heal thy sick woman.' Siwap, thus provoked, made a last effort: he screamed, he cried, he wept; but all to no purpose, nothing worked. Mad with rage, he came out, advanced towards Father Bonald, and condemned him to death: 'Before the leaves grow yellow,' said he, 'thou wilt have vanished.' Letting it be understood that, by his superstitious magic, he would have caused his death. As a matter of fact, however, he himself was under the ground before the leaves had grown yellow." This act of courage on Father Bonald's part started a movement of conversions which has gone on growing ever since. Good night. The sound of the rapid is making me sleepy.

August 13. Sunday. On the shore of Lake La Loutre. (Nikikokakikan). The last two days have been spent in making portages, long and short, good and bad. We are in the country of portages *par excellence*. It is a good thing that the Almighty has set aside a seventh day for rest; we are very glad to keep it today. Our whole body feels the need of it. Father Gailloux is the one who enjoys this day's halt most, for he has an attack of *portage indigestion*, which takes the very heart out of him. He began his Mass this morning, but had to leave off at the *Kyrie*. He is groaning in his tent. As far the two Indians, they are stretched out in the sun, snoring. Their happiness is practically perfect.

As for myself, I am sitting on my blankets, at the door of my tent, admiring the beauty of the lake and its surroundings. I am praising, and praying to their Divine Maker; at times my mind goes forth to those who are dear

to me, or reflects on plans for the future. Thus the day passes, peaceably enough.

August 14. Father Guilloux is a little better. The weather is fine, the wind fair, and our swelling sail carries us pleasantly over lovely Lake La Loutre. We are enjoying ourselves, but the thought that another string of portages awaits us at the end of it, tempers our enthusiasm. Poor Father Guilloux looks forward sadly to them.

In camp. On Duck Lake. All our portages are finished. *Deo Gratias!* Father Guilloux is not much the worse of it. The thought that we shall reach the Sacred Heart mission, at Pakitawakan, tomorrow, gives us courage, and will bring us pleasant dreams tonight.

August 15. At Pakitawakan. We arrived here at two in the afternoon; our Indians gave us a splendid reception. There were decorations, flags, banners, bee bell ringing joyously, and firing—of course. The Indians drawn up in two lines, the men on one side, the women on the other, knelt down, as soon as I landed, to receive my blessing. Here, again, I feel myself moved beyond words, at seeing these dear Indians once more, whom I knew well in old days. I am all the more touched and delighted at their splendid reception that it is wholly due to their own initiative, since they have no missionary resident among them.

Their chief, Mathias Colomb, is an intelligent man, enterprising and zealous for religion; his authority leaves nothing to be desired. He is more than six feet high, so that when he speaks, no one dares gainsay him. It was, therefore, under his orders and direction that everything was got ready, and nothing could have been better done.

Father Bonald was the founder of this mission also. It was he who came from Pelican Lake, about 34 or 35 years ago to convert the first Indians of this locality. He had to undergo many privations and sacrifices, in order to get here, but he had his reward, for his ministry was most fruitful.

It is said he used to give as many as 50 or 60 baptisms a day.

But he did not merely administer this sacrament essential to salvation, he also knew how to instruct them, and to make fervent Christians of them. At the present time, indeed, they are certainly the best in all my Vicariate. They are noted for their good morals, their simplicity, and their great faith. They love our Dear Lord, and serve Him faithfully. The confessors difficulty here is to find matter for absolution.

The reason why these Indians are so superior, is that they have not yet come in contact with white men, that is to say, with the clerks of the Trading Companies. They live apart in the forests, in little groups of friends and relations. It is only in summer and here at church that they all meet. If they are rich in spiritual possessions, they are of the very poorest in material possessions. Fish is their constant food, but fish only, without biscuit, salt, etc. Some of them are beginning to grow potatoes. If they wish to taste flour, they have to pay from twelve to fifteen dollars a hundred pounds for it.

I am going to spend five days in preaching a retreat to them. It will be a pleasure to me, for I am sure my words will fall on good ground, and bear fruit.

The church of this mission is the first I built in this country, and dates from 1888. I have never forgotten, since for more than a month the Indians and I worked at it like hired laborers, without other food than fish and kingfishes, without flour, without tea, and even without salt. The Indian women boiled roots of bushes for us to take the place of tea.

This chapel, built of squared trunks of trees, and covered with earth, is still standing, but has become the missionary's residence, during his stay here. A year ago, a larger and somewhat less primitive chapel was built, but even it is very poor and very bare.

August 21. Once more en route. I have just left

our dear mission of the Sacred Heart, on my way to that of the Assumption, at Fort Nelson.

The five days of retreat were days of overpowering fatigue, but I experienced many consolations in the midst of these good Indians. What good souls there are under those dirty clothes so full of fleas! They received Holy Communion four days running, and eighty-six were confirmed. I had forty of the very smartest children in my catechism class; Father Guilloux had an even larger one.

The chief got up a subscription for me, by way of a surprise. Each family contributed two dollars, though not one of them had that amount in hand. They were obliged to borrow it, with a promise to repay it when the government Agent comes to pay them their yearly five dollars. My surprise and emotion when they came and presented me with a purse containing \$94, may be imagined. It hurt me to accept this most generous alms, knowing that it came from such poor and destitute people. When I asked what I could get them in return to give them pleasure, they answered: "Some religious articles; crosses, pictures, rosaries and scapulars." Such an answer shows their faith and their piety.

I have left Father Guilloux, who has to return to his mission of Saint Gertrude. My guides are Jerome Colomb and Celestin Peau of Caribou, two famous rowers, and excellent fellows, just now, a fair breeze is sending us along under sail in a delightful fashion.

August 23. On the Bois-brule river. All goes well. The fair breeze and the fine weather have been in our favor ever since we left. We are now in the country of the ducks and the elk. As for the former, we already have a good number of them in the canoe, and enjoy them at every meal. As for the elk, we have to make the best of seeing their many tracks, and to live in hope of catching sight of one at least.

August 24. We are only a few miles from the mission of the Assumption, but a strong north wind keeps us from

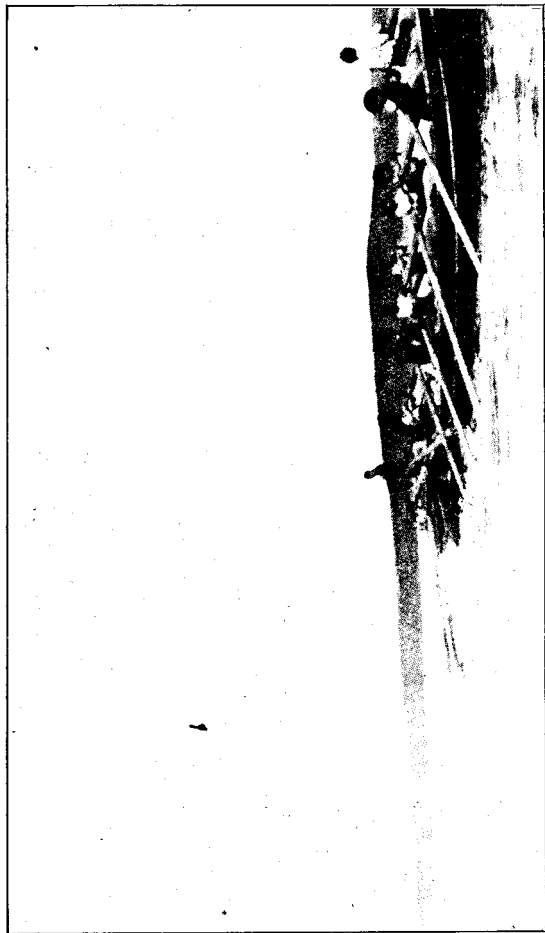
crossing the lake. Just now, I am sitting in the bushes, waiting impatiently for the calm which shall allow me to rejoin good Father Lecoq at the mission.

August 26. At the mission of the Assumption. We were able to get here last night, after ~~all~~ although somewhat late. It was no small pleasure to see the good and venerable Father Lecoq again, who was anxiously awaiting me, since, for some weeks past he has been keeping an involuntary fast, living only off the spoil of his nets and of his rabbit snares. I was sorry, however, to find that most of our Christians had been compelled, by hunger, to move off to places where there were more fish, before my arrival. There are only, so to speak, three families left, who have braved hunger, rather than miss my visit. They are converts whom I formerly baptized, and who have persevered in their faith, in spite of the minister's solicitations. It was one of these good people who, at the beginning, came and knelt at my feet, saying, humbly: "Father, teach me how to pray."

Once more, it was Father Bonald who had the honor of being the first to appear in this lonely spot, and to convert the first Christians. But it was I who had the honor of giving this mission the noble title of the Assumption, in memory of my dearly-loved parish of that name. * I also had the merit of building the chapel, and the small missionary's house. That is nearly 18 years ago. Everything is falling into ruin. The roof of pine bark, now lets the rain in freely. Rebuilding is absolutely necessary, but where is the money to come from? This is a Methodist country. The minister of this sect had the advantage of being here first. Our present Catholics, about a hundred in number, have been won over from heresy.

The present minister has a salary of \$1200, and hopes to get \$300 more, when he can find a wife. If the Catholic missionary had half that salary, not only could he live, but he would soon have built a fair house for the Eucharistic God.

* *L'Assomption, P.Q., birthplace of Mgr. Charlebois.*



HIS GRACE CROSSING LAKE CARIBOU IN ONE OF THE HUDSON'S BAY CO.
BARGES.

The said minister has had a curious experience. Last winter, he told anyone who would listen to him, of a dream which seemed to bother him greatly. He had no Joseph to interpret it, but the meaning of it was not difficult to grasp. Here it is.

"I thought," he said, "that I was dead, and that my soul, surrounded with darkness, was looking for the gate of heaven. I found it at last, but Saint Peter kept it locked. My soul asked him to open it. 'Who are you?' Saint Peter asked it. 'I am so and so. Methodist Minister of such and such a mission.' 'Quick, get out, go over there, where you see a great fire, there is no room for you in Paradise.' As I left," added the minister, "I saw Father Bonald coming. He was all brightness, and dressed in white. Saint Peter said to him: 'You are Father Bonald, Catholic priest and missionary?' 'Yes I am.' 'Good; go in, it is people of that sort whom we are glad to receive.' " This dream made such an impression on his mind, that it seems he is somewhat disposed to become a Catholic!

August 28. Sunday. We had pontifical Mass this morning, and confirmation this afternoon, to the great admiration of our Christians, and of the Protestants present. The mitre and pastoral staff were something wonderful to them; their large black eyes could not admire sufficiently. It was the first time they had seen such a ceremony; it will be a long time before they forget it.

August 29. En route once more. Father Lecoq and I left the mission of the Assumption this morning; it was impossible to stay there any longer, on account of the dearth of food. At the present moment, we are sitting in the minister's canoe; he has been kind enough to give us a passage in it gratis. Perhaps he hopes thereby to get on easier entrance into the gate of heaven! There is a crew of four Indians, and we are four passengers; Father Lecoq and I, a young Methodist, and a little Indian boy, whom we are taking to school. We are all crowded together, it is hard to find place for one's two feet. The position is very tiring, but Father Lecoq's good company helps me to forget the

annoyance. This priest is one of our veterans of the Northwest missions. He was my predecessor at the mission of Saint Joseph, at Cumberland. His white hair seems to call for rest and retirement, but his motto seems to be: "*Non timeo laborem*." No task too hard for him. Last winter, he went logging in the forest. With the help of a good lay-brother, he cut more than 300 logs, which they brought out of the forest by sheer strength of arm. I have no doubt the gate of Paradise will open to its widest when he gets there. He certainly deserves that it should.

August 30. In the tent. Everyone is very tired. We have just made a portage of three good miles across impossible swamps. Everyone has his tender spots. Personally, it is my shoulders and my feet that complain of the way in which they have been treated. The former found the load too heavy, and the latter regret the bits of skin left on the roots and rocks. Nor was poor Father Lecoq the last to do his share, in spite of his age and his fatigues.

August 31. Another hard day! Portages, and nothing but portages; five in all, from two, to two and a half miles long. It follows that we have done from 10 to 12 miles since the morning, with arms and baggage on our backs. It was hardly the way to cure us of yesterday's fatigues. This evening, every one of us is worn out—without further particulars, I yield to the call of my blankets.

September 1. Only four miles of portageing since this morning, and we feel more comfortable. We are camped on the river Nelson, up which we must go as far as Cross Lake.

This morning, during a portage, we crossed the track of the Hudson's Bay railway. We saw several surveyors who were still working there. Shall we ever see railway engines at work in these wholly Indian countries? Probably we shall, but no one can tell when.

September 2. We have reached Holy Cross mission, on Cross Lake. The Protestants joined with the Catholics to celebrate my arrival. All under the orders of their chief,

took part in the firing. The officers of the Company, a Protestant, had hoisted his flag; only the little Methodist minister kept to himself. Good and venerable Father Bonald was the happiest of all, at seeing his old comrade of the Pelican Lake mission once more. It is 24 years, to the day, since we first met at the mission at Le Pas. He was even then an old missionary, and I just a little greenhorn, lately out of the Scholasticate. I gladly recognized him as my superior. And now Providence has changed our parts, and has brought us together at Holy Cross mission, which did not then exist. Enough for this evening. I still feel the effects of the portages, and am in need of rest.

September 3. Sunday. It was about the year 1896 that I first came to this mission at Cross Lake, where no missionary ever set foot. The Indians, indeed, shewed signs of great surprise at sight of the black-robe. Some of them took me for a "Wittiko" (a cannibal). Most of them, however, were glad to see the Catholic priest, of whom they had heard speak, more than once. One of them was bold enough to address me in this wise: "Thou, at least, art a true man of prayer (a priest), but as for the Methodist ministers, they are all evil dogs." The officer of the Company, himself a Protestant, besought me to obtain the foundation of a Catholic mission. "The Indians are very bad," he told me, "and it is the fault of the minister who spoils them." Two years later, I came back to the same place. The same request was made to me by the Company's clerk. The Indians shewed themselves very well-disposed towards me. They asked me to sing hymns, to pray, and to speak to them of our holy religion. I did so gladly, but it was only seed scattered on the ground.

It was on New Year's day, 1910, that I gathered the first fruits of it. I spent the day in giving instruction, and in baptizing. In the evening, all the Indians, with their chief at the head of them, invited me to a meeting in the Protestant school. There, they unanimously insisted on having a Catholic missionary. I promised to intercede for

them with my superiors. I then left, touched to the heart by their good dispositions.

In the summer of the same year, Father Bonald arrived among them, to remain permanently. His coming aroused the animosity of the minister, and war was declared in due form. Father Bonald, though a small man, never once gave way. On the contrary, he had the almost daily satisfaction of scoring a victory over the enemy. At the present time, he has 216 Catholics, or nearly half the population. Nearly all the Catholics, with a good number of Protestants, were present, this morning, in a charming chapel, at the pontifical Mass. The effect produced by such a ceremony on the recent converts, and on the Protestants themselves, may be imagined.

We intend to take advantage of their good dispositions by preaching a triduum to them, before administering the sacrament of Confirmation. I trust the Holy Ghost may make them more fervent and steadfast in their religion. There are even grounds for hoping that, in a few years, there will be only one fold and one shepherd here. Much might be said of the zeal and devotion shown by good Father Bonald in this mission. He has sown in labor and in sufferings. If he has not yet reaped in the fulness of joy he has a right to hope for, he has at least the consolation of having done his duty, and of having won many souls to Jesus Christ.

September 5. The solemn ceremony of Confirmation took place this morning. Eighty-one Indians took part in it, and more than 50 others should have had the same happiness, but they had already left for their winter quarters.

After Mass, a chief, two councillors, and two constables were elected. Then followed a debate on certain questions affecting the welfare of the mission, after which, all withdrew, satisfied and happy.

I have now but to get my belongings ready for leaving. I must, however, first go and confirm two sick persons in their homes. Father Lecoq, who is more active than I,

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has already set out, with two men and some children, for his school at Norway House.

As for me, I shall have to bid farewell again to my dear Father Bonald. It grieves me to the heart to leave him alone, notwithstanding his age and his infirmities. Why have I not a young priest to give him as a companion? He would soon have learned the Indian language, and have been able to go on with the conversion of the Methodists. Besides this mission, there are several other places where Protestant or pagan Indians are clamouring for a Catholic priest. We are forced to answer them: "Impossible! We cannot go to you; for lack of evangelical laborers." But it is an answer that grieves the soul of a missionary bishop. 7 p.m. I have just left Cross Lake. Our canoe leaked so badly that we have had to camp here, only three miles from the mission.

I am with two Indians, a Catholic and a Protestant, Alexandre and Thomas. We have still 60 miles to go to the next mission, Norway House. Let us hope that the weather will be favorable. Meanwhile, I am going to sleep in my dear little tent.

September 8. Norway House. I arrived here this afternoon, somewhat suddenly, as they did not expect me so soon. My reception was, therefore, necessarily a modest one, for which I was not sorry. The splendid decorations showed, however, the good will of the Fathers, the Brother, and the Sisters. Good Father Lecoq had only arrived an hour before me, the reason being that my men were better than his. The staff of this mission comprises Father Lecoq, in charge, Father Thomas, Brother Gautier, and four Oblate Sisters of the Sacred Heart and Mary Immaculate. The mission is of only four or five years standing. It was Father Beys who had the courage to come and settle down here among Protestants. The first beginnings promised an abundant harvest of conversions, but the bigotry of the ministers soon put an end to this good movement. We have as yet only some thirty Catholics in a population of about a

thousand. There is still work to be done. A boarding-school has been started, in order to foster conversions. So far, it is only a grain of mustard seed, but it holds promise for the future. The good Oblate Sisters manage it with much tact and devotion; they show themselves true and holy missionaries. It is a pity that there are not more of them, and that the Congregation is not better known to our Canadian young women. It seems to me that many of them would gladly devote themselves to our Indian missions. They would like the name of "Oblate Missionaries."

Brother Gautier, again, is a pattern of devotion. Good religious as he is, he is also the factotum of the mission. He is fisherman, hunter, carpenter, blacksmith, etc.; the best of comrades and the most faithful and valuable of helpers to the missionary; always happy and contented. His only regret is that he has not another Brother to keep him company. "Ah! Monseigneur," he said to me, with tears in his eyes, "give me a companion with whom I may work and devote myself!" It was with a sad heart that I was forced to answer him: "Good Brother, I have not a single one at my disposal. What can I do?" And yet there are so many good and honest young men who might come and be missionaries among our Indians. If any one would like to have the title of companion to good Brother Gautier," I would gladly give it him. I had the pleasure of meeting good Father Turquetil here, whom I mentioned before. Having obtained at Churchill all the information necessary for establishing a mission among the Eskimos, he came straight back this way instead of going by Montreal. He is full of enthusiasm for the Eskimos, and dreams of nothing but of founding a mission among them. The difficulties are very great; but his zeal and devotion are even greater. There is no money for it; but what is chiefly lacking, is a companion. Who will have the courage to offer? Such a companion found, the evangelization of more than 3000 Eskimos will begin. It will be a precious and meritorious undertaking in God's sight. Let us pray the Lord of the

Harvest that He will at least send a second laborer into this harvest.

September 11. We have already settled to leave tomorrow morning. The next mission will be Saint Alexander, at Grand Rapid, 150 miles from here, with the whole width of this great Lake Winnipeg to cross. Father Turquetil is to be my companion; we shall at least be able to give each other absolution in case of shipwreck. Our craft will be a plain canoe; our guides will be Thomas, mine, and John George.

September 13. On the shore of Lake Winnipeg. A fair day yesterday; but today we are forced to stay where we are; a strong southerly wind keeps us from entering the canoe. It is by no means interesting to hear nothing but the sound of the waves, all day long, and to see nothing but a boundless expanse of water, and to sit wearily on the ground under a wretched little tent. But we must appear cheerful and brave, nevertheless; there is nothing to be gained by being out of temper.

Father Turquetil knows this, and is trying to amuse himself by lying in wait for the mews with his gun, and to check them in their majestic flight. He already has a good many of them lying on the sand of the lake shore. Thomas and John have gone to set a snare for caribou. These animals are so numerous that their tracks in the forest are as beaten as those of cattle in a pasturage. By spreading snares in these paths, one gets a chance of stopping and strangling the first one that comes along.

Hullo! Father Tusquetil has just brought down another bird; and I yield to the temptation of following his example.

September 15. Still on the shore of Lake Winnipeg. A god day. It fell calm this morning, and we left our camp without delay and without regret. Our two rowers put forth all their strength, with the result that we had soon got over a distance of ten miles. All at once, our good old John George called out: "Muswok Muswok!"

(Elk! Elk!) Three fine elks had, indeed, appeared on the shore. They were drinking, bathing and playing; a female, with her two young ones. John George at once set out in pursuit of them, by crawling through the bushes; we went on paddling silently. Presently, we heard a shot, then a second, and a third, and the three elks disappeared in the forest. John George made us what seemed to be signals of distress. What had happened to him, we wondered. Had he missed them, or was he hurt? You should have seen us paddle as hard as we could. We got there at last, all out of breath, and he called out: "Give me some more bullets, "I have wounded two." I pumped ashore at once, and set off with him. About two acres from the forest, we found the mother stretched on the ground. One of her young ones lay by her side; the third stood close by, and seemed to be asking what happened to them. To put him out of his trouble, I lodged a bullet in his head. Another bullet finished the wounded one, and we were in possession of three fine animals, to the immense delight of my Indians. They were going to have fresh meat, and even milk to color the tea. A difficulty, however arose: what were we to do with such a quantity of meat? We could not possibly put it all in our canoe. Fortunately, an Indian is never at a loss for a practical expedient. They made a great hole in the thick, cold moss of the swamp where we were, and put the meat into it; covered it over with moss and pine branches; then set up a scare-crow to frighten the wolves. This meat will still be quite fresh when they come back, and they will be able to take it to the Fathers and Sisters at Norway House. What do you think of that kind of cold storage? I took the precaution of taking with us all the meat of the elk I had killed myself. It seemed to me much the best.

In addition to this export, we have done more than 30 miles today. It is fair this evening, and promises us a fine day for tomorrow. Meanwhile, we are going to sleep well.

September 16. In the same place. Things are not so cheerful today as they were yesterday. A strong wind keeps us weatherbound on the point of a peninsula. It is Saturday,

and we ought to get to Grand Rapid for tomorrow. It is quite impossible, however, and we must make compulsory acts of resignation.

Our men are taking advantage of this halt to lay in a store of sleep, and to lessen our supply of meat. If they are not ill, their digestive powers will have been put to a severe test.

September 18. At Grand Rapid. Here we are at last, after all our troubles and miseries. That wretched Lake Winnipeg; Seven days to do what can be done in two! However, the main thing is that we have got here safe and sound. Hardly had we landed, when a Catholic ran up to me, saying: "Quick, Monseigneur, "my child is dying, and is not baptized." I flew to the poor little sick child, and was just in time to baptize him, so that his soul went to enjoy the beauty of heaven, and of the good God! What happiness for it! And what a joy for me!

September 19. This mission of Saint Alexander at Grand Rapid comprises fifty Catholics living among about 200 Protestants. In spite, however, of these surroundings, they cling very steadfastly to their faith and are attached to their religion, though they only see a priest twice a year. I used to visit them during the sixteen years of my mission at Cumberland, and regard them as my children. Tomorrow I shall bless the marriage of a girl whom I baptized myself. There is a pretty little church here, a great part of which I built myself. The masonry foundations too had the honor of being laid by the hand of a bishop, Mgr. Pascal. It was at this mission that I began my ministry among the Indians on August 24, 1887. But though he has memories that are naturally very dear to me, I cannot stay long in the place. We shall start again tomorrow, if possible, for Le Pas. The difficulty will be to find men and canoes.

September 20. We are still here, and shall have to stay here until the 26th. The men who are at liberty have no canoes, and those who have canoes have gone elk hunting. It is annoying, as I am in a hurry to get home, but there is

nothing for it but patience. I shall take advantage of the delay in order to catechize; the people are sorely in need of it.

The delay will, moreover, afford us an opportunity of practising poverty and mortification; for there is no store in this place, with the result that the people are short of everything; they have no tea, no sugar, no pork, no tobacco, no matches, etc., and we are reduced to the same dearth as themselves, with fish as our only food. This morning, at the beginning of Mass, there was not a single match to light the candles; we had to send to two houses to find one. The poor smokers are hard up—as the metis say—“*en arrachent*.” They are sad: they draw at their empty pipes, are out of temper, suffer themselves and make others suffer. By way of consolation, I make fun of them, by showing them what slaves they are to a wretched and miserable pipe. But you cannot convert them, for all that. They sigh for a little pinch of tobacco, with a tear in their eye. So true is it that “he who has drunk will drink and he who has smoked will smoke.”

September 26. 3 p.m.* We at last left the Grand Rapid mission this morning, and have already come eight miles up the rapid. Here however, we are wind-bound in sight of Traverse lake. The true Keewatin (North wind) is bringing us both the cold and great big waves. We must once more be patient, in spite of our wish to get on.

September 29. 5 p.m. The weather was calm this morning, but very cold. The water froze at the sides of the canoe, and on the paddles. It did the same in my cruet while I was saying Mass in the tent. However, a fine sun came in good time to warm up the atmosphere; so that we feel more comfortable at present. We took advantage of the calm to get up the remaining rapids, and half way across Cedar Lake, where we are once more wind bound on an island, by a South wind, this time. Patience! And yet patience! We have only dry biscuits to eat. It is not very appetizing, and, oh! the heart burn that ensues!

September 28. 4 p.m. Just at the very moment when I am settling down to write, the men are calling out: "Pasitak! Pasitak! (on board! on board!) As a matter of fact, the wind seems to be going down, and to be giving us our freedom. To work, then, with the baggage, and then into the canoe as quickly as possible. Goodbye dear little island! Thanks for your kindly hospitality. Where should we have been but for you?

September 29. We succeeded, yesterday, in crossing the famous Cedar Lake, but it was late when we got to the other side, though we paddled with a will. This lake, discovered by the French, was originally called Lake Bourton. Later, however, the English gave it the name of Cedar Lake, by which it is now generally known. It is most appropriate, since, throughout the whole West, it is only on the islands of this lake that the true cedar is to be found. We are now travelling on the Saskatchewan river. The current is very strong, and the paddle has to be made good use of. Father Turquetil and I have, therefore, to use one turn about. It is very hot today, and the sun burns our faces.

October 1. Feast of the Holy Rosary.

LE PAS.

Deo Gratias! Here we are, at home once more, after more than four months absence. I arrived this afternoon at two o'clock. Having left in the beautiful month of May, I have returned on the first day of the month of the Holy Rosary. My journey could not have been otherwise than fruitful and prosperous, since it was made under the protection of our good Mother in heaven. It has certainly been a great consolation to me. I shall soon have forgotten the fatigues, the sufferings, and the worries, and have only the comfortable conviction of duty done, of good accomplished, with the hope of a reward in another life.

During this journey, I have travelled about 300 miles by railway; 80 miles in a heavy waggon, without springs.

over frightful roads; 2000 miles in canoe; 40 to 50 miles on foot over portages through the forest; I have slept 60 times on the ground, sheltered by a little canvas tent.

I have said Mass as many times under the same tent. I have visited 14 missions, comprising a population of 4500 Catholic Indians.

Six of these missions had never been visited by a bishop. I have preached seven retreats of from four to six days. I have confirmed 1100 Indians, whose good dispositions have greatly edified me.

I have been pained to note the dearth of missionaries. In ten or twelve important centres, the Indians, pagans and Protestants alike, are anxious for a Catholic priest, and I have not one to send them.

The foundation of a mission among the Eskimos is a pressing necessity. More than 3000 of these people, still pagans, but well-disposed, will fall into the hands of Protestant missionaries, if we do not go them at once. But, for this work more missionaries are wanted.

We should also need fairly large amounts of money in order to start new missions, and to build up the old ones.

Here, at Le Pas, they are building me a very modest "place", and a reasonably large house which may serve as Cathedral, school, or hospital in case of need. The alms which I collected last autumn will not suffice to pay for these buildings, still less, to furnish them.

I ought also to build a school at Norway House, which will cost a lot of money, etc., etc.

O all powerful Providence of my God! help me! Teach those Christians who have money to spare, the good they can do by their alms.

This is what I said to our Dear Saviour, this evening, at Benediction of the Most Blessed Sacrament.

On coming out of church, I noticed that our Catholic population has grown largely during our absence.

They have had to make a board-addition to my famous twenty-two foot cathedral; nearly every train brings us new families. The saw-mill, the construction of the Hudson's Bay railway, and the logging-camps, give employment to a great many. As yet the French Canadians are far more numerous than people of English speech. Instructions are given, every Sunday, at church, in French. Catechism is taught in French, in English, and even in Cree. We are organizing a school which shall be bilingual, in the fullest sense of the word. Canadians, French and English alike, shall be at liberty to preserve their mother tongue.

Good Father Francois-Xavier Fafard combines the duties of parish priest, superior, vicar-general, bursar, etc. Needless to say, that he is the greatest use to me in every way; has great prudence, and the best will in the world. Father Husson fills the position of procurator-vicarial, with zeal and competence.

My "diary" ends, naturally, with my pastoral visitation. With all its imperfections, I venture to offer it to my friends and benefactors, as a pledge of affection and of gratitude. Of each and all, I ask a prayer for the success of my mission.

OVIDE CHARLEBOIS, O.M.I.

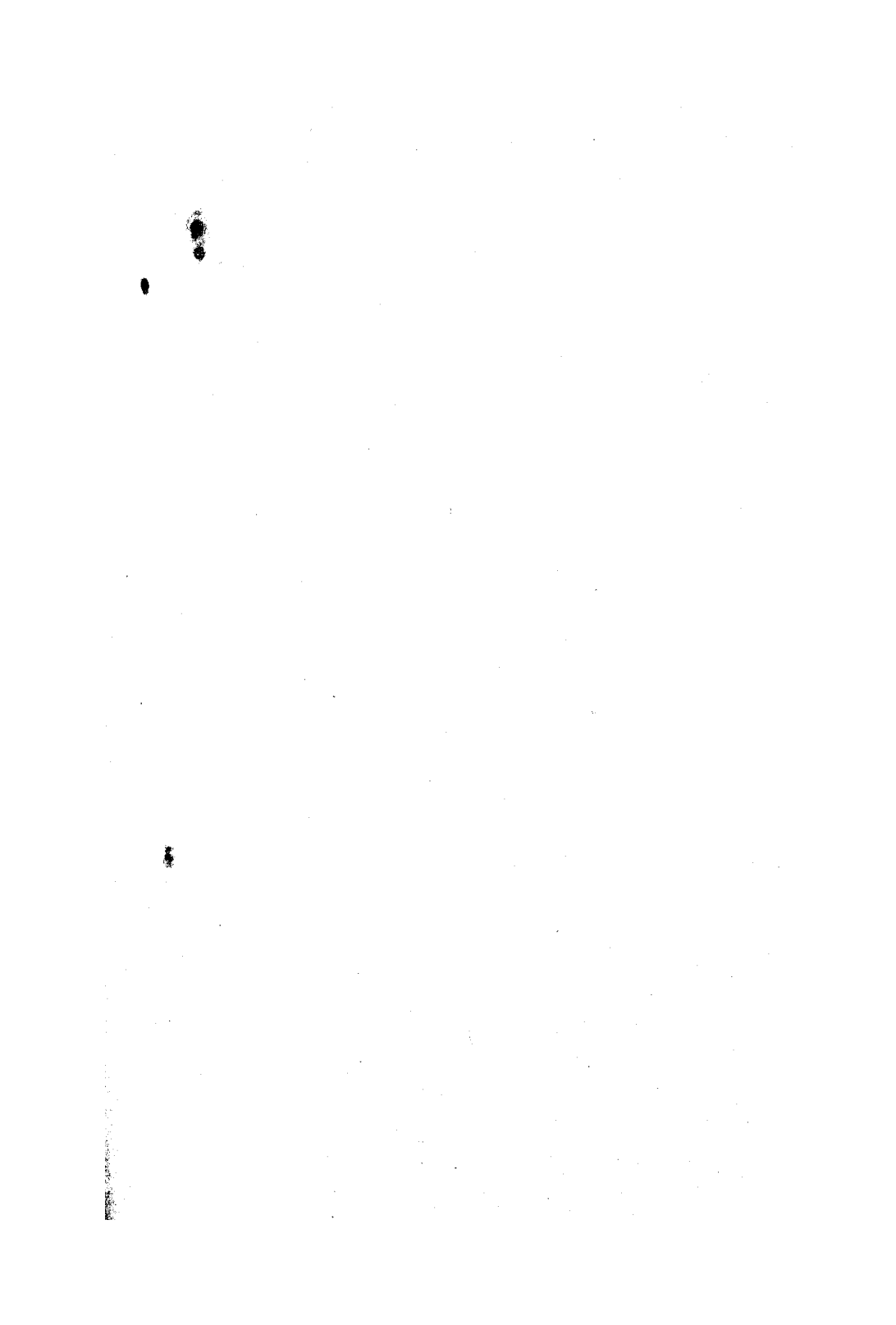
Bishop of Berenice,

Vicar Apostolic of Keewatin.

(Address): Le Pas,

District Keewatin,

Manitoba.



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